

ROBERT W. SPEER





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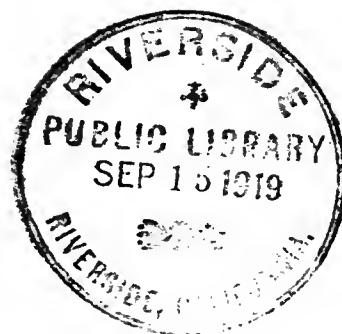
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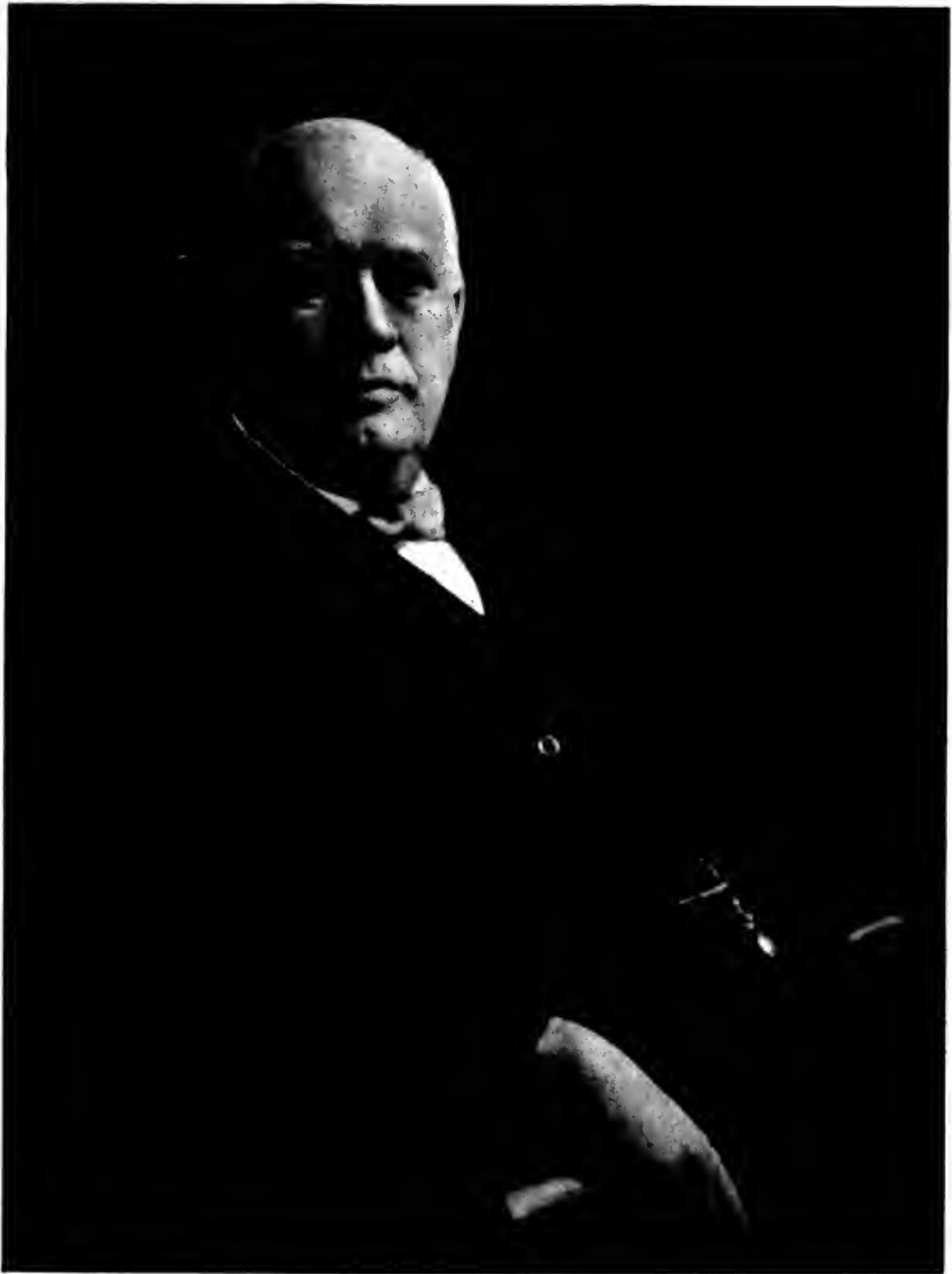
MacMechen  
Robert W. Speer,  
a city builder

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**ROBERT W. SPEER**  
**A CITY BUILDER**



*Denver's Master Builder*  
THE HONORABLE ROBERT W. SPEER

# ROBERT W. SPEER

A CITY BUILDER



*Published by Authority of the Council  
City and County of Denver*

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## *Preface*

**T**HIS is a little book about a big man. To those who knew Robert W. Speer intimately it will seem all too incomplete a record of the splendid works of his hand, materialized on every street in Denver; of those inspired vision-children of his brain, bequeathed as a priceless legacy to this city and, lastly, of his great heart.

Mayor Speer excelled as a politician, as a financial director par excellence, as a builder, as an artist and as a man. He builded in terms of the spirit, as well as in stone. He left Denver his indomitable courage, his faith in her continuing greatness, definite visions for public improvement, the highest and purest civic ideals and the love of a father for a child.

It took years for the citizens of Denver to realize his real worth. In the beginning, before his great creative works had been completed, he was a decade in advance of his fellow citizens in all his plans for civic betterment. With the prophetic gaze of the seer he saw the form of the things he had planned, where others could perceive only a shining vapor. Happily, before his untimely end, he had been able to materialize so many of his visions that his fellow-citizens gave him their complete confidence and esteem.

In the appendix of this volume have been printed a few selected speeches, or excerpts from speeches, delivered by Mayor Speer. They throw an illuminating light upon his character and philosophy of life, more accurate than any analysis that we could make. They show that his ideas might change, but that the principles upon which he conducted his life were fixed and unalterable.

This book was written under authority granted by the City Council, and is intended to serve, not alone as a biography, but as a public record of Denver's golden age of development. We believe it to be a record of city planning and city building unequalled in the history of American municipalities. These circumstances made it necessary that the chronicle of Mayor Speer's achievements should be rather more in detail than would have been necessary for the purposes of an ordinary biography, but the editors console themselves for this with the thought that Mayor Speer would have preferred that such a book should tell more of Denver's advancement and less of his personal attributes.

The editors desire to thank the following persons for the valuable suggestions and assistance rendered by them in the preparation of this book: J. Frank Adams, James H. MacLennan, H. A. Lindsley, Henry Read, George G. Speer and Thomas McIluff.

E. C. M.



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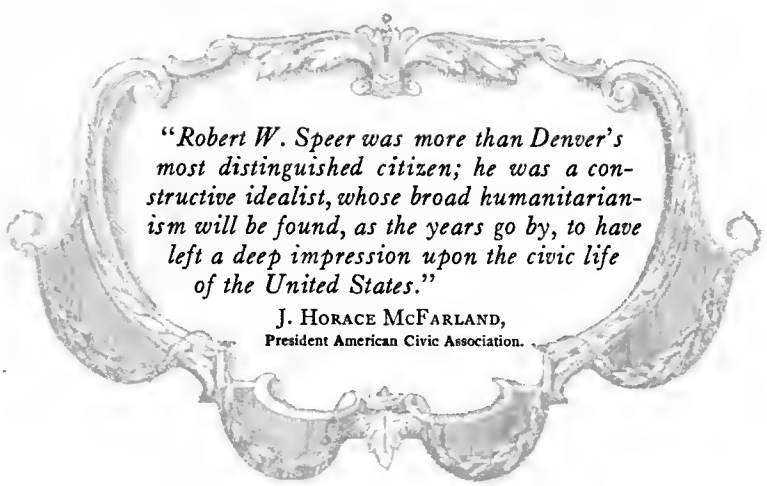
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*"Robert W. Speer was more than Denver's most distinguished citizen; he was a constructive idealist, whose broad humanitarianism will be found, as the years go by, to have left a deep impression upon the civic life of the United States."*

J. HORACE MCFARLAND,  
President American Civic Association.

DEDICATED TO KATE A. SPEER

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# ROBERT W. SPEER—A CITY BUILDER

## CHAPTER I.

*Genealogy of the Speer Family—War Record of Mayor Speer's Father—A New Lincoln Anecdote—The Old Family Carriage Horse—The Beginning of a Life Romance—Why Mr. Speer Came to Denver—His Picturesque Start in Politics—Groundwork Laid for Future Greatness—The First Mayoralty Campaign and a Memorable Victory.*

**R**OBERT W. SPEER, three times mayor of Denver, came to this city while it was still a rough, frontier town. He was a mere boy then, a sufferer from tuberculosis, without friends or money. Denver gave him back his health; in return he gave her his life. When he died in the Mayor's chair, May 14, 1918, his reputation as a municipal expert had become world-wide. He had accomplished in a decade what ordinarily would have required a generation. Denver, under his guiding hand, became the distinctive metropolis that it is today.

Mayor Speer began his real career as a dabbler in politics, attracted by the fascination of the game. To a man of his strong character and masterful brain the game soon proved not worth the candle. He sought an earnest purpose in life, one which would give opportunity for the dominant, creative instinct that lay dormant within him. This outlet he found in city building, and his impelling interest in politics from that time forward was to secure the power necessary to give expression to this impulse. The government of cities became, first his hobby, then the all-mastering passion of his life. With the exception of four years, spent as postmaster of Denver, he never held a political office that was not municipal. He often said that he would rather be mayor of Denver than governor of Colorado. In his later years he cherished an ambition to become United States senator, but back of this was a concrete program for the betterment of his city and state.

This brief foreword is necessary that the reader may understand as he peruses the succeeding pages, the almost fanatical devotion of Mayor Speer to the study of city government, and the application of his knowledge to the city of his adoption.

Like so many of America's brainiest and strongest men, Mayor Speer was of Scotch-Irish extraction. From the Scot he inherited those admirable qualities of tenacity, and hard, common sense; from the Irishman he drew a warm, impulsive nature, an aggressive disposition and vision. So many men have one without the other. The man of affairs rarely is endowed with creative vision, whereas the dreamer frequently does not possess the strength of purpose and practical ability to materialize his dreams. Mayor Speer was of that rare, composite type, able both to conceive and to execute.

The first trace of Mayor Speer's family is found in the Seventeenth Century at the time of the Claverhouse persecutions in Scotland. Among the refugees who fled to the north of Ireland was a Covenanter preacher, who bore the name of Speer.

The direct line of descent became clear with Robert Speer, known to have been a descendant of this preacher, and Jean Quate Speer. The latter was born in Bronghshane, Ballymena, Ireland, and died March 30, 1833. Robert Speer had six children, one of whom, John Speer, became a farmer at Ballyrobert, Ireland, and leased his farm, for which he paid one hundred pounds per year rent, from the Marquis of Donegal. John Speer died March 5, 1834. His widow, Agnes Martin Speer, came to America in June, 1841, and died at Fairfield, Iowa, January 20, 1861.

## ROBERT W. SPEER

John Speer had nine children, of whom Robert Speer, the grandfather of Denver's great mayor, was one. Robert Speer was born February 27, 1803, married Agnes Cowan at Belfast, Ireland, January 17, 1822, and, a few months later, sailed with his bride for the United States. An old church letter, now in possession of George Gray Speer, of Denver, gives an interesting sidelight upon the character and reputation of the Speer family. A strong religious vein, inherited from the straight-laced, God-fearing, Protestant stock, ran in their blood. The text of the letter follows:

"That Robert Speer and his wife, Agnes Cowan, now Speer, were born and bred in this congregation, and that they have from infancy conducted themselves with prudence and propriety, now admitted to the Lord's table, are at present in full communion with us, and now leave us free from all scandal and church censure and may be admitted members of whatever worthy. . . . they see fit to join.

..... CRAIG, Presbyterian Minister.  
..... 22"\*

Several other members of the Speer family had preceded the young emigrants to America, and it was to the home town of one of these, Gordon Speer, an uncle, that they came. They settled in Shade Gap, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, later moving to Cassville, Pennsylvania, in 1826, and to Fairfield, Iowa, in 1851. Robert Speer died there the following year, his wife having passed away before the family left Cassville.

Robert Speer left ten children, of whom George Washington Speer was the father of Denver's mayor. George W. Speer was born in Shade Gap, August 9, 1825; married Jane Ann Brewster on October 29, 1851, and died at Mount Union, Pennsylvania, on February 2, 1864. Jane Brewster Speer was born in Path Valley, Pennsylvania, June 9, 1829, and died at Mount Union, November 20, 1888.

Robert Walter, Denver's future mayor, was still a very small boy when his father died, but his mother lived for several years after Robert had begun the political career that was to lead to fame and honor. All of Robert Speer's boyhood acquaintances unite in saying that she was a woman of splendid moral fibre, capable and purposeful in the guidance and instruction of her children. Many of her admirable qualities were inherited by Robert, and, when at the zenith of his power, the latter acknowledged his debt to her in an address before the Denver Chamber of Commerce. He prefaced his remarks with these words:

"My mother was a quiet woman; by some she might have been called a little old-fashioned and slow. She always stood for the right, the just, the good, and no sacrifice was ever too great for her to make for those she loved. Her memory is a legacy of more real value than gold."

The members of George Washington Speer's family were born in Cassville, but later the family moved to Mount Union while the children were still young. Four of these reached their majority: John Brewster, Robert Walter, Margaret Isabella and George Gray Speer. Robert was born December 1, 1855.

Mayor Speer's father attained considerable distinction during the Civil War. He was Colonel of the 149th Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment, known as the "Bucktails," because officers and men all wore bucktails in their caps to signify that they came from the mountainous region, and were crack shots. The regiment became famous for its fighting qualities, but their colonel was early transferred to Washington, where he served as assistant provost marshal of the United States, with the rank of major. There is an interesting Lincoln anecdote detailed in one of the young officer's letters to his family, dated January 21, 1863. The letter contains this reference to the martyred president:

\* Blanks represent part of the letter torn off and lost.

## A CITY BUILDER

"Sunday morning at eleven I went to hear Bishop Simpson preach on missions. The house was densely packed and, when President Lincoln came in, he could scarcely get a seat. The Bishop opened my heart for the first time to the importance of missions. After they had raised about \$500 and had got about all that appeared could be got, I raised up and stated that I would give \$10 toward making Abraham Lincoln a life director of the society if the audience would raise the other \$140. Lincoln got up and told the Bishop that he would pay the other, but the audience raised it at once, and such shouting and praying you would hardly think could be tolerated here, as was heard for the next ten minutes. The Bishop said that it was a noble suggestion of that young officer, and Lincoln came and gave me his hand, and asked me to call on him often. The meeting broke up at two p.m."

The first incident that comes to the attention of the biographer of Mayor Speer illustrates a trait strongly emphasized in his later life—love of dumb animals. It occurred during the battle of Gettysburg, in July, 1863, when the sound of the cannon and the arrival of Confederate prisoners at Mount Union brought news to the residents that a great battle was in progress. Many rumors began to float into the little town. Some said that Lee's army was winning, and that the gray-clad patrols of Dixieland soon would be pushing their way through the streets. A panic seized upon the inhabitants and some of the more excitable began to move their valuables to Jack's Mountains, some fifteen miles distant. Among this hurrying throng might have been seen two small boys, mounted upon a fat and protesting old horse, who swished his tail angrily at the drumming of four small heels upon his ancient sides. It was the faithful carriage horse, rheumatic with age, but in the eyes of Robert and George Speer, the most valuable possession of the Speer family.

As a boy Mayor Speer attended the Dickenson Academy at Williamsport, Pennsylvania. At the same time his sister was a student in the girls' seminary there and had, as her closest friend, Kate A. Thrush, the daughter of a minister of the gospel at Lewistown, Pennsylvania. One day the two girls were rowing upon the river that runs through the town, when the boat capsized. Young Robert was within sight of the accident and, leaping into the water, he rescued both. This was the beginning of a romance that lasted throughout his life, for Kate Thrush afterward became Mrs. Speer and the center of an ideal home life.

Robert Speer began his business career as ticket agent at Shirleysburg, Pennsylvania, and later returned to Mount Union as an employee of the Adams Express Company. After a few months he secured a position with the Pennsylvania Railroad at Altoona, Pennsylvania. His sister had fallen a victim to tuberculosis and, while Robert was in Altoona, had gone to Illinois. It became evident that she could not hope for a cure in that climate, so the family determined that she should try Colorado. Robert was called upon to act as her escort, and, giving up his position, he took his sister to Pueblo, Colorado, where they remained during the summer of 1877. The life of the frontier town proved too raw for the eastern girl, and, like many another tubercular victim of those days, she said that she preferred to return to her home town to die. In the fall of 1877 they returned to Mount Union, where, shortly afterward, Margaret Speer passed away. Robert had resumed his position with the express company, at the same time reading law in the office of his uncle, Robert Melton Speer, of Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. In the early part of 1878 he was seized with a violent hemorrhage. He was then compelled to seek Colorado for his own health, and came to Denver. He merely passed through the city on this occasion, going to a ranch in the country. Naturally possessed of a powerful physique, he threw off the disease and returned to Denver, where he secured a position as carpet salesman in the Daniels & Fisher stores at a salary of \$8 a week. The lint and dust of the carpets acted as an irritant to his lungs, and he was transferred to the office force. Because of his beau-



Mayor Speer's Father.



Mayor Speer's Mother.



Mrs. Speer, the Mayor's Chief Adviser.



R. W. Speer, When He Came to Denver.



## A CITY BUILDER

tiful, vertical penmanship, he was assigned the task of writing the reports that were forwarded to stockholders in New York. Yearning for an outdoor life, Mr. Speer left the employ of Daniels & Fisher to associate himself with Cyrus H. McLaughlin in the real estate business, which relationship existed until his election as city clerk. It was while occupying this position that he began to take an active interest in politics. Possessed of an open, frank, winning nature, he quickly made friends and soon was counted as one of the coming young men of the party. He made a trip to Lewistown in 1882 long enough to marry Kate Thrush on May 16th of that year, returning to Colorado immediately afterward.

Mayor Speer repeatedly said that the city which gave him back his health was good enough for him. He loved Denver as he might have loved a child of his own—it was his child and he, above any other single man, helped to mould its destiny.

The youthful Speer, still in his twenties, early manifested a genius for political leadership. Within two years after his marriage he had become prominent in Democratic circles. The Republicans at that time were entrenched in City Hall. The City Council, then composed of a board of aldermen, was Republican by one majority. The time arrived for the election of a city clerk, April 10th, 1884. When the vote was cast, a secret ballot, it was found that R. W. Speer had been elected to succeed C. F. Leimer, a Republican. An open poll of the vote was demanded, but this produced a solid majority vote for the Republican. The Republican friend of the young Democrat did not want to be caught in political treachery, then much more serious than in later years. The Republican incumbent of the office refused to give it up on the strength of the verbal poll, but young Speer had been elected on the legal ballot and was not a man to be denied his rights. He and his friends went to the City Hall at night to gain possession of the office by a ruse, but his opponent had been expecting such a move, and was already in the office, prepared for a long stay. There followed a short parley, a demand for the keys of the office, a curt refusal, and the next moment Leimer found himself seated in the hallway, ruffled in spirit, but unhurt. This ended the contest over the office. From this time until his appointment as postmaster of Denver by President Cleveland in 1885, Speer remained city clerk. Four years were spent in the service of the federal government. Mr. Speer then returned to the real estate business, which he conducted until his election as mayor. In 1891 John L. Routt, one of Colorado's empire builders, became governor of the state. He had been mayor at the time that the young Democratic leader had been elected city clerk, and admired the fighting qualities of the man. The legislature had just created by statute the fire and police board of Denver, placing the appointive power for the offices in the hands of the governor. Governor Routt named two Republicans and one Democrat, the latter Robert W. Speer. Soon the governor began to hear complaints from his party leaders. "We are supposed to have a Republican fire and police board in Denver," was the burden of the plaint, "but there is a young Democratic fellow down there at City Hall who is running the whole thing." In spite of these protests R. W. Speer continued to "run things" until the expiration of his term.

While police commissioner of Denver, under the Routt regime, Mr. Speer laid the foundation for the powerful Democratic machine of later years. The two Republican members of the board could not work in harmony, and neither would vote to confirm an appointment of the other. Each sought the vote of the Democratic member to secure the appointment of his friends. Mr. Speer was quick to take advantage of the opportunity offered, and whenever he voted for the confirmation of a Republican applicant it meant that one or the other of the Republican members had been pledged to vote for a Democratic appointee in return. By working one against the other Mr. Speer, although entitled

## ROBERT W. SPEER

to no appointments according to the political standards of that day, secured an equal number of all appointments made, and divided the political make-up of the fire and police force effectively.

With the election of Alva Adams as governor in 1897 Mr. Speer again became a public office holder. He was appointed police commissioner in April of that year, served until April, 1899, was then appointed fire commissioner by Governor Charles S. Thomas and served in this capacity until April, 1901. On June 1st of the latter year Governor James B. Orman appointed him president of the board of public works of Denver, and, in this capacity, he served until June 1st, 1904. During all these years, feeling between the state and the city of Denver, stirred by politicians for selfish purposes, had been growing more bitter. It resulted in the submission of an amendment to the Colorado State Constitution, which was adopted as Article XX. This document consolidated the city and county government of Denver, divorced it from the County of Arapahoe, and gave the new city and county political independence in local and municipal affairs. A charter convention was called and, on March 4, 1904, the people of Denver adopted their charter. Immediately afterward R. W. Speer became a candidate for mayor, was elected, and on June 1st of that year took office.

The election campaign was characteristic of his indomitable will. Every newspaper in the city was opposed to him, favoring a business man's candidate. The first act of Mayor Speer was to buy up all the best billboard space in the city and to plaster these boards with facts concerning his accomplishments on the fire and police board, and the board of public works. To this he added defiance of the newspaper combination, set forth in those terse, epigrammatic sentences of which he was past master. During his service on the boards mentioned he had built up the greatest political machine in Denver's history, a compact, fighting power which nothing could shake in its allegiance to its leader. Those were the days when political machines flourished, and R. W. Speer had created a masterpiece of its kind. Often since that day newspaper commentators have said of him that he bound his friends by "hoops of steel," an apt quotation, because these men and women were his faithful supporters to the day of his death.

Thus began the eight golden years of Denver's development.



## CHAPTER II.

*Beautification the Keynote of His First Two Terms—Mayor Speer a Trained Specialist—Auditorium, Cherry Creek Improvement and Civic Center Projects Launched—The Modern Park and Playground System Developed—The Annual Tree Day—Pioneer Monument and Library Determine Civic Center Bounds—Bathing Beaches Created—Creation of Denver's Million-Dollar Picture Park.*

SO INTERWOVEN was the constructive development of Mayor Speer's first two terms that they may be considered as one from a biographical standpoint. Beautification was the keynote of this period. The general appearance of the city changed completely. The parks were expanded and brought to a high state of culture, the boulevard and parkway system was created, the streets assumed a finished, metropolitan aspect, the number of shade trees increased at least twenty-five per cent.

There also was remarkable improvement in public works not visible to the eye; in the mileage and size of sanitary and storm sewers. Underground conduits were constructed in the business section to carry all telegraph and telephone wires that previously had cobwebbed the streets.

At the same time numerous and important social service labors of a communal, recreational and economic nature, were performed. Of these the development of an unparalleled free municipal entertainment program in connection with the auditorium, and the popularizing of the parks, were the most pronounced.

Denver was but an overgrown country town when Mayor Speer assumed the reins of government. Public improvements had been made in a haphazard way without system or vision. City planning, as it is now known, had not become the absorbing problem of municipal students and builders that it is today. Before the modern city planning movement had come into vogue Denver's mayor had established a comprehensive plan that would provide for the city's needs in the distant future.

The years of preparation gained as a municipal officer had equipped Mayor Speer for the work before him as few city officials in this country ever have been equipped before taking office. He demonstrated fully the value to a city of a specialist, trained in the affairs of city government. He was the forerunner of a type that eventually will serve the public in an official capacity. It is even now in course of evolution through the adoption of the manager form of government. Neither the rank opportunist, nor the highly trained business man, as a general rule, is competent to step into the mayoralty office of a great city and successfully manage the people's affairs. The one does not know enough about ordinary business conditions; the other often has affiliations too closely connected with big interests to serve the people disinterestedly.

Mayor Speer, through his preliminary training, had secured an intimate and practical knowledge of the methods and needs of every city department. He was always a close observer and had formulated concrete ideas of development. This was demonstrated during the first few months of his administration when he launched the Cherry Creek improvement, the auditorium bond issue, and, shortly afterward, the civic center project. It was imperative that the man who hoped to carry to a successful conclusion this stupendous program should be a tireless worker, whose recreation should lie in his work. This was the case with Mayor Speer. During his entire official life he worked almost every

night, spent Sunday mornings in his office, read municipal works, official reports, statements and specifications to the exclusion of all other forms of literature. Although not a product of higher education as it is known today he had secured a good academic foundation. Insofar as his knowledge of public affairs is concerned he was self-taught. His marvellous faculty of concentration, and his desire to be thorough in every act, enabled him to be both student and creative artist at one and the same time.

The first few years of the Speer administration were largely formative, during which were inaugurated projects that their author knew would require time for their accomplishment. Still, he was able, during this period of his stewardship, to bring to maturity many works, rated by the world as among his less important achievements, yet each contributing to a general purpose.

One of the first problems to be met in 1904 was the organization of the park department on a business basis. The new charter laid an injunction upon the incoming mayor to provide for future needs of the city.

Prior to the adoption of the charter the total park area had been 572.60 acres, for acquisition of which the city had paid \$3,110,005.56. Mayor Speer appointed a park commission, with power to name a superintendent and assistants, and to expend the park levy.

Four park districts were created from the one that had existed, the people authorizing bond issues in the following amounts during the years designated; Highland Park District on the north side, bonded in 1906 for \$230,000; South Denver Park District, bonded in 1907 for \$243,500; Montclair Park District, bonded in 1908 for \$397,700; East Denver Park District, bonded in 1912 for \$2,700,000. During the eight consecutive years from 1904 to 1912 the park area increased to 1,183.53 acres, and the total land valuation was swelled to \$6,598,000. During the same period expenditures for permanent park improvements totalled \$620,641.31.

The parks in existence at the time of Mayor Speer's entrance into office, practically speaking, were unimproved. In addition to their improvement he added Berkeley Lake, Rocky Mountain Lake, Sloan and Cooper Lakes, besides many smaller areas. A beautiful boulevard system, laid out by George E. Kessler of Kansas City, was established, and eighteen miles of boulevards and parkways, with side or center parking, were constructed. Included in the boulevard system so created is Speer Boulevard and Marion Street Parkway, both of exceptional beauty and both possessing unique features. The former involved the walling of Cherry Creek, more fully discussed in a later chapter, and the latter the parking of the City Ditch. In this instance the sides of the ditch were lined with concrete, sloping terraces created, and a center parking plan of great attraction worked out. The double boulevard thus created converted a sparsely settled country road into a magnificent residence street, and served to connect Denver's premier landscape parks, Cheesman and Washington. Considerable area was added to Washington Park, and a second lake constructed in the newer or southern half.

Early in his first term Mayor Speer ordered the removal from the parks of all "Keep-off-the-Grass" signs. People were invited to make the same free use of them as they would of their lawns at home, and one of the most interesting sights that may be seen in Denver parks occurs nearly every afternoon during the summer, beginning about four o'clock. Thousands of citizens, with their children, troop into City Park and Washington Park with basket lunches in their hands. They find some cozy corner along the shady borders, or under the trees, and have delightful picnic parties. The park crews make the rounds every evening and pick up all rubbish and papers. Several of the lakes are well stocked with black bass and perch, and these were thrown open for free fishing. The mayor's park policy called for their use to the fullest extent.



Pioneer Monument and the Library Were Located With Purpose.

## ROBERT W. SPEER

Mayor Speer was quick to discern that parks, the more beautiful they became, would attract attention to the barrenness of their surroundings, unless the residence streets kept pace with them in the beauty and variety of their verdure. It is very generally known, even to those who have never visited the city, that Denver is located on what was once part of the Great American Desert. Originally its site was covered by buffalo grass and sage, except for a scattering line of cottonwoods, cherry and plum trees along the South Platte river. In the older sections of the city trees had been planted by the early settlers, but in 1904 the newer sections were still without shade. Mayor Speer conceived the idea of giving away saplings free of charge to citizens, with the request that they be planted in the street parkings. The first tree day was held in April, 1905. At this time 4,992 trees were distributed. Three trees were presented to each person bearing an order from the mayor or a member of the city council, and, accompanying the gift, was a printed set of instructions as to their proper location and care. This custom was continued for seven years, the last tree day occurring April 19, 1912, when 18,000 young elm and maple trees were distributed. The total number of saplings given away during this period was 111,000, of which nearly eighty per cent. survived. The average annual cost was \$5,000, taken from the fund contributed annually by the Denver City Tramway Company as a condition of its franchise.

The custom, involving as it did a comparatively small outlay of money, was among the most highly appreciated acts performed under the Speer administration. Only those who have lived in the semi-arid West, without protection from the blazing lancers of the sun, can realize what it meant in comfort, in restfulness to the aching eye, and in increased property values.

The modern playground system of Denver was created by Mayor Speer, and its development carried along in conjunction with the expansion and development of the park system. Between 1904 and 1912, the playground system was built up from nothing. Twelve equipped and supervised playgrounds were bequeathed by his administration and many more built in the parks.

Practically all the architectural improvements of the parks were built under Mayor Speer's administration. The first of these was the William W. McLellan gateway at the Eighteenth Street entrance to the City Park, a handsome gray granite structure that cost \$13,700. It was presented by a former member of the city council, father of the ordinance for the purchase of City Park. The ordinance for construction was passed in 1903, while Mr. Speer was president of the board of public works, and it was completed during his first year as mayor. Mayor Speer always loved to refer to this gateway as a laudable example of civic patriotism, for McLellan was a man of moderate means and probably gave half his fortune in an effort thus to stir civic pride in other citizens.

Erection of the Welcome Arch at the foot of Seventeenth street, closely followed. This great structural iron archway, standing directly in front of the Union Station, was the gift of a combination of corporations, civic organizations and individuals. It cost approximately \$30,000 and was dedicated on July 4, 1906. The arch was studded with incandescent lights so that incoming visitors, whether they arrived by day or night, were greeted by the simple word "Welcome" on the span of the structure. No single public donation, perhaps, has more widely advertised Denver, for its picture on colored post cards was sent to all parts of the civilized world. On the reverse side was "Mizpah," a Hebraic word from the Old Testament, meaning "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another."

In 1908 the electric fountain in the large City Park lake was completed and operated in connection with the nightly band concerts by the Denver Municipal Band. During



The Fighting Face of  
R. W. Speer.



Former Secretary of the Treasury  
W. G. McAdoo, and Mayor Speer.



He Was a Lover of Plants.



Mayor Speer Distributed Over a Hundred Thousand Trees.

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intermissions the fountain leaps from the bosom of the lake like a glowing jewel. It throws 4,000 gallons of water a minute, has one hundred and twenty-five water formations and nine color combinations. It cost \$19,577, and was erected from general revenues.

The Pioneer Monument on the civic center was the result of another joint subscription by corporations, individuals, the State of Colorado and the City of Denver. The state donated \$10,000 and the city gave \$7,500 and the site. The total cost was \$75,000. This, one of the most distinctive monuments of the city, immortalizes the hardships, the courage and the triumph of the early pioneer. The equestrian statue of Kit Carson crowns the monument. Around the base are three groups, depicting "The Pioneer Mother", "The Trapper" and "The Prospector", all resolute and distinctive types of frontier days. Frederick Macmonnies designed the fountain, which was dedicated on March 30, 1910.

The Pioneer Monument and the Denver Public Library, the latter dedicated on November 1, 1909, were the features that definitely fixed the site of the civic center. The library stands on the corner of West Colfax avenue and Bannock street, and cost \$450,000, of which Andrew Carnegie gave \$200,000. The building is strictly classical in design and constructed of Colorado gray sandstone. This stone is the same that was used later in the construction of the Court of Civic Benefactors, so that the influence of the building upon the material and architecture of the civic center has been determinative. Before Mayor Speer left office \$80,000 additional was given by Mr. Carnegie for the construction of four branch buildings. The sites were selected and the plans approved by the library commission and the mayor before he left office in 1912.

The year 1909 also saw the completion of the Cheesman Memorial. This handsome white marble structure, patterned after the Roman Doric, stands upon a high eminence in what was originally Congress Park. It was presented by the widow and daughter of Walter S. Cheesman, one of Denver's pioneer builders, and cost \$100,000. The name of the park was changed by the city in honor of the donor.

These were busy years in the life of Mayor Speer. One improvement after another marched in rapid succession before the astonished eyes of Denver's citizens. The city's first municipal golf links were established and opened in Berkeley Park during the fall of 1910.

In June, 1911, Denver's bathing beach system was inaugurated by the execution of a contract for erection of a bath house and construction of a beach in the northern Washington Park lake. This had been preceded in 1908, on July 23rd, by the opening of a public bath house at Twentieth and Curtis streets. The land and building cost \$87,000 and it was fitted with a large pool, showers and complete accessories. Its popularity was enormous, more than one hundred and fifty thousand people using it the first year. Two years later the open-air swimming pool for children, in Lincoln Park, was completed. The dedication took place on June 4, 1910. The basin was a small one, forty by one hundred feet, and the bath house at one end was not sufficient to meet the demands of the children. The improvement was built largely as an experiment, but from the date of its opening there was no doubt in the mind of Mayor Speer that the Denver public wanted bathing beaches.

The following year a contract was signed for the erection of the large bath house in Washington Park. The history of the bathing beach movement in Denver is exceedingly interesting, for when the city was founded there was nothing in the form of a lake on its site. Every lake was scooped from the dusty prairie, or water from the streams was diverted to fill some natural depression in the ground. No city ever overcame such obstacles to secure so simple and desirable a landscape feature as did Denver in securing her park lakes. The Washington Park beach was opened before the bath house had been completed, and





"Keep-off-the-Grass" Signs Were Abolished by Mayor Speer.



Washington Park Beach Inaugurated Open-Air Bathing in Denver.

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so enthusiastic were the throngs that crowded the shore that the success of the venture was fully established at once. The succeeding administration erected a second bath house at Berkeley Park.

Of all Mayor Speer's minor park improvements there was one, however, that stood forth as a stroke of pure genius. This was the improvement of Inspiration Point, Denver's unique and unrivaled picture-park. Early in the year 1910 Mayor Speer asked the city attorney for an opinion as to whether the city had the power to purchase property outside its legal boundaries. H. A. Lindsley, at that time counselor for the city, rendered an opinion which held that the city could not acquire property of this character. The reason for the inquiry was that Mayor Speer desired to secure a high point of land, which overlooked Clear Creek, and to use it for park purposes. His subsequent action in regard to this matter illustrates in a very striking and characteristic manner his decisive methods and superior executive qualities. He called upon John McDonough, a real estate man and member of the park commission, to buy up in McDonough's name all the land necessary to fulfill his purpose. The owner of this land, in Jefferson County, had not paid taxes upon it for some seven or eight years, and the Mayor personally gave Mr. McDonough the money to buy up the tax certificates from the county of Jefferson. When he had secured title to the land he made the city of Denver this offer: "I now have title to Inspiration Point. If the city desires to acquire and improve this point for park purposes I will give it a deed at the cost of acquisition; if not I will keep the land myself." The city accepted the offer, a concrete wall was thrown about the rim of the hill, and a surfaced driveway was built from Berkeley Park to the spot. The cost of the land was approximately \$8,000.

From the point an uninterrupted view of the Rocky Mountains, stretching north and south for two hundred miles, is obtainable. At the extreme north Long's Peak stands out like a sentinel from the main range; on the south historic Pike's Peak lifts its lion-like bulk into the air. The beautiful Clear Creek valley, checkered with orchards, truck gardens and small farms, lies at the feet of the spectator. For an outlay of some \$8,000 Denver secured a million-dollar picture. This is its sole purpose; it holds nothing else of interest. The point was opened for automobilists in 1910 and is regarded as one of Mayor Speer's most distinctive achievements.

It must not be imagined that these undertakings were accomplished without bitter opposition. Hardly a month passed but that he was assailed by his enemies, who had with them two and sometimes three of the leading newspapers of the city. It doubled the magnitude of his works, and left those who witnessed the struggle to wonder how much greater would have been his success had he been given the support his genius merited.



### CHAPTER III.

*Utilitarian Improvements Outstripped Those in Parks—Annual Expenditures on Streets and Sewers Averaged Million and a Quarter Dollars for Eight Years—Mayor Speer and the Public Utilities—The Story of Two Viaducts—Birth of Denver's Lighting System—His First Trip to Europe and the Children's Fountain—The Organ Contract.*

**W**HILE MAYOR SPEER was carrying out his plans for beautifying Denver he was, at the same time, advancing other projects of a more utilitarian nature. Public improvements in grading, curbing, surfacing and paving streets; in laying sidewalks and sewers, building bridges, viaducts and a subway under the railroad tracks, outstripped the expenditure on parks and boulevards.

There had been an accumulation of law suits, extending over a long period of years, and before Mayor Speer's great improvement program could be launched effectively it was necessary that this legal debris should be cleared from his path. City Attorney H. A. Lindsley filed a motion with the Supreme Court of the state to advance twenty-seven special improvement district cases then pending before that body. The motion was denied. Thereupon the city attorney secured from the membership of the Chamber of Commerce and other commercial bodies, a monster petition, which requested the court to advance these cases in the interest of Denver. This petition had a humorous but instantaneous effect. The Court refused to allow Mr. Lindsley to file it, but asked him to renew his motion. This being done the cases were promptly advanced and decided, and a legal situation ended that undoubtedly saved Mayor Speer two years time in constructive development of the city.

During the eight years of these two administrations the average annual expenditure for the work just cited was a million and a quarter of dollars. On June 1, 1904, the total value of street, sidewalk and sewer improvement was \$7,490,715.43. On June 1, 1912, it was \$17,283,201.26.

The cost of sewer improvements alone equalled the amount of the civic center bond issue. Two hundred and sixty-two miles of storm and sanitary sewers were laid at a cost of \$2,758,000. Two hundred and thirteen miles of streets were graded, one hundred and sixteen miles were surfaced, thirty-five miles of street and alleys were paved, four hundred and forty-one miles of curbing and three hundred and fifty miles of sidewalks were laid. This was accomplished through the establishment of local improvement districts, for which property owners had petitioned. The largest sewer project was that of the West and South Side sanitary sewer, completed in the spring of 1912. It drained an area of twenty-four square miles and involved one hundred miles of main line pipe.

To facilitate the paving work Mayor Speer established a municipal asphalt plant at a cost of \$25,000. It was located at Myrtle Place and Shoshone Street, and was opened for business August 1, 1911. This was one of the first municipal asphalt plants in the country, and served continuously up until the present year, when the city acquired a more commodious plant at the end of the Twentieth Street viaduct under the administration of Mayor W. F. R. Mills.

Soon after his election in 1904 the practiced eye of Mayor Speer detected a disproportionate expense in the repair of highway vehicles. He built the first real city shops in 1905 at 936 Twelfth street. When these quarters became inadequate in 1912 he built the present shops at Thirteenth and Market streets.

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One of the favorite modes of attack against R. W. Speer was to make the accusation that he was a corporation man. Mayor Speer never could tolerate a professional reformer. He doubted the sincerity of this type and distrusted its representatives. But he gave abundant and conclusive proof on numerous occasions that he was under the thumb of no corporation or individual. He believed in getting results, and because of his willingness to negotiate with public utility and railroad corporations was able to secure from them more concessions in the interest of the people than any other administration before or after his time. When the Denver City Tramway Company and the Denver Gas & Electric Light Company submitted franchise propositions to the people on May 15, 1906, it was the mayor who insisted that these franchises should carry a provision for payment of an annual sum into the city treasury. In the case of the Tramway Company the amount was fixed at \$60,000 a year, and in the case of the Gas Company at \$50,000 a year. He also forced a reduction in the annual charge for arc lights from \$90 to \$60 a year. Considerable criticism was directed toward him in connection with the latter contract. The city at that time owned a small lighting plant in West Denver, the Lacombe Plant, which, in order to serve adequately the city's needs would have required a heavy outlay of money. Mayor Speer did not believe that Denver was ready for the establishment of a municipal light plant, and considered it a better business proposition to permit the Gas Company to purchase this plant. This was done. Like any transaction of a similar nature, however, the question was capable of transformation into political propaganda, and his enemies took full advantage of their opportunity.

The most complete answer to charges that he had corporation leanings, however, may be found in his negotiations for the construction of the Twentieth Street viaduct, the Alameda subway and several bridges. About the time that his second term opened the need of a viaduct over the railroad crossings at Twentieth street became pressing. For fifteen years previous administrations had attempted to force construction of such a viaduct by the railroads, but the matter had been held up by litigation. In 1908 Mayor Speer determined that the city should no longer be balked in its desire for such an improvement. He instructed the city attorney to dismiss all pending litigation in connection with the matter. Naturally this caused a fresh outbreak of accusations by his political opponents, but this did not disturb the man at City Hall. His next step was to call a meeting of the presidents of the railroads involved. The response showed that the railroad officials regarded this merely as another annoying incident. They sent local representatives to the mayor's office on the appointed day. When these men walked into Mayor Speer's presence the latter inquired their business.

"We have been delegated," was the unanimous reply, "to negotiate with you in regard to the Twentieth Street Viaduct."

"I invited the presidents of your roads to attend a meeting for that purpose," suavely replied the mayor, "but I have nothing to take up with you gentlemen. This meeting will be adjourned now."

The next day an ordinance was introduced in the city council which required that the railroads should maintain watchmen at the Twentieth street crossing, and that all incoming and outgoing trains should come to a full stop at Nineteenth and Twenty-first streets, and await a signal from the watchman to proceed. Those were days when city councils were supposed to be open to manipulation, and the railroad officials merely smiled. Imagine their chagrin and annoyance when they found that the usual methods were without avail. The council, composed for the most part of ardent Speer followers, turned a cold ear to the railroad agents, and passed the ordinance. Again the presidents of the roads were notified



Inspiration Point, a Stroke of Genius That Cost a Bagatelle.



Marion Street Parkway, One of Mayor Speer's Creations.



The Denver Public Library, Built Under the Speer Regime.



Cheesman Memorial Was Presented During His First Term.

## A CITY BUILDER

and this time every one was on hand promptly. The session opened with danger signals flying in the offing. The officials were angry and inclined to be defiant.

"You wouldn't dare to tie up through train service," they stormed. "The public wouldn't stand for it."

"I'll take the chance on that," answered Mayor Speer, a steely glitter showing in his eyes. "That ordinance will be enforced unless you gentlemen agree to construct that viaduct and stop the menace to the lives of Denver citizens." His jaw was set firmly; determination shone from every feature of his face and, to clinch the matter, he raised a heavy fist and brought it down with a bang on the table.

"Now you have it, plunk!" he declared, with the words and gesture that had become famous among his associates.

The upshot of the matter was that an agreement was signed between the city officials and the railroad presidents on August 2, 1908. More than three years later, on December 20, 1911, the city accepted and opened the viaduct. The total cost was \$613,578.53, of which the city's share was \$66,730. The following railroads put up the remainder of the cost: Union Pacific, \$166,241.88; Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, \$174,991.46; Colorado & Southern, \$168,976.12; Denver, Northwestern & Pacific, \$36,636.84.

There is a marked contrast between the results obtained by the city in connection with this improvement, and those obtained in connection with the Colfax-Larimer Viaduct by the succeeding administration, that of Henry J. Arnold, who went into office as a reform mayor on the largest vote ever given a chief executive of Denver.

Mayor Speer had opened negotiations for construction of this viaduct across the South Platte River before he left office. He had them advanced to a very favorable point from the city's standpoint when his term expired. The Arnold administration resumed negotiations but, being in a hurry to get the work started, unfortunately let this fact become known. Quite naturally the railroad officials concerned displayed no desire to come to an agreement. The people of Denver had been accustomed to an administration at City Hall that accomplished results, so the Arnold administration felt that it must make an early beginning lest unfavorable criticism be aroused. An agreement was made by which the city was to bear 30.6 per cent. of the cost, the railroads and the Denver Tramway Company the remainder. The Tramway Company, however, made an offer to pay a flat price and no more, and this offer was, unwisely for the city, accepted. A bond proposition was submitted for \$260,000 to pay the city's share of construction, and the people, as yet with full confidence in the new administration, voted the issue. The State of Colorado, through the legislature of 1911, added another \$50,000.

The cost greatly exceeded the estimates and the city was forced to make up the shortage that resulted after the Tramway Company had paid out its share. The ultimate result was that the viaduct cost \$950,913.48, of which the city paid \$381,866.52, less the \$50,000 contributed by the state. But this was the least unfortunate feature of the affair. In order to secure the co-operation of the railroads, the city council and mayor ceded to the roads two miles of city streets and alleys beneath and around the viaduct, valued by the assessor as worth \$500,000 at a conservative estimate.

Another instance of Mayor Speer's ability to secure results favorable to the city from corporate interests occurred in connection with the construction of the West Alameda Avenue subway. The object of this improvement was to eliminate a number of dangerous grade crossings and to furnish to the residents of Valverde and Southwest Denver easy communication with the central portion of the city by roadway and street car. The total cost of this 1,256-foot subway was \$245,216.53, of which the city paid one-third, the Tramway Company one-third and the railroads the remainder. The Tramway Company used





Cherry Creek Today, Looking Across Speer Boulevard and Part of the Sunken Gardens.



## A CITY BUILDER

one side of the subway for street car tracks and extended its line to Valverde. Three steel bridges of the girder type were used to carry the eleven tracks of the railroad companies across the subway. As part of this same general scheme two steel bridges were built, one across the old water company canal and one across the South Platte. The cost of the two, \$36,000, was divided half-and-half between the city and the Tramway Company.

A safety measure of considerable importance to West Denver residents was accomplished in 1910, when the Mullen ditch, used for mill power, was closed. Again Mayor Speer divided the cost for the city with the railroads, each paying \$20,000 for this purpose.

The Art Commission, created in the Charter of 1904, actively assisted Mayor Speer in carrying out the details of a comprehensive city plan. With the able help of this body Denver became one of the best lighted cities in the world. So pronounced was the success in this respect that it gained the title "The City of Lights." Especially attractive was the ornamental lighting system. Ornamental light poles, holding pearl globes, were installed on Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Eighteenth streets, during Mayor Speer's first two terms, and the system was greatly extended during his third term. The first step was to abolish all overhead wires except those of the Tramway Company. Telephone, telegraph and signal service companies were compelled to lay their wires in underground conduits. Through an agreement with the Tramway Company the new iron trolley poles on Sixteenth street were sheathed in cast iron casings, and ornamental brackets with globe attachments were fastened to these. Speer Boulevard wires also were laid underground. The Art Commission again rendered the city a notable service in 1908 when plans were announced for the erection of several sky-scrapers of fifteen to sixteen stories. A letter of protest was sent to the Mayor by its president, Henry Read, and the former promptly supported him in order that the city might develop in a uniform manner. All buildings were limited to twelve stories, the only exception being the slender campanile of the D. & F. tower, which is interesting as an architectural feature.

While immersed in these prodigious undertakings Mayor Speer found time in 1911 to make his first trip to Europe. He was impelled to do so because of a rare opportunity presented for study of European municipal government. The Boston Chamber of Commerce resolved to send a selected party of American mayors and distinguished municipal students to Europe for the purpose of investigating municipal conditions there, with the idea that much of value to American cities would be brought back to this country. It was a lofty and patriotic conception and one that, in the case of Denver, resulted in definite, beneficial results.

Mayor Speer was one of the mayors invited to make the trip. He sailed from this country with Mrs. Speer on June 17th, 1911. Soon after joining the party he was named chairman of the committee on "How Foreign Cities are Governed." This was a recognition of his accomplishments in Denver, by that time known throughout the country.

There are many interesting stories about Mayor Speer in connection with that trip. He went as a student, with the intention of profiting by travel. Consequently he avoided banquets, speech-making and the showy side of the trip, and spent his time interviewing European city officials, inspecting public works, especially their civic centers, for he hoped to secure ideas that would be of assistance in building the civic center at home. At Dusseldorf, Germany, his absence from the party became so noticeable that it attracted more than the usual amount of attention. Members of the party soon learned that if Mayor Speer was wanted in a hurry the quickest way to find him was to send a messenger to the beautiful children's fountain there. If the Denver mayor was not then standing in rapt attention before that appealing interpretation of childish innocence and purity, he was sure to appear within the course of half an hour. Childhood, it has been noted, held an

ROBERT W. SPEER

irresistible charm for him, and this group of M. Blondat, the gifted Frenchman, haunted his imagination. Before he left Germany he secured permission to have a duplicate carved from marble by the sculptor, and this is the Children's Fountain that stands on the south shore of the large lake in City Park. Three children, seated upon an overhanging rock, look down with laughter and childish wonder upon a group of three bronze frogs, huddled together upon the edge of a limpid pool, while, from their mouths tiny jets of water spring upward toward the children. The Blondat group stood on the line between strictly architectural improvement and the introduction of decorative sculpture, and exerted a decided influence upon the artistic development of the city.

Mayor Speer returned from Europe on August 26th of the same year—1911. The trip had had a wonderfully broadening effect upon him. He saw city problems in a new light, and came back better fitted than ever to govern Denver. However, the full benefits of the travel did not appear then. A movement had been started to secure a new administration at City Hall. Politics occupied much of his time. A few works already started were finished, but nothing new was taken up except the proposition to secure a pipe organ for the auditorium. For this purpose he appropriated \$50,000, and signed a contract with a leading organ manufacturer. This contract later was cancelled by his successor and the money diverted to other purposes. The Sopris gateway to City Park, presented by S. T. Sopris in honor of his father, Richard Sopris, an early mayor of Denver, was completed. The esplanade entrance to the City Park, which formed the setting for two of the most notable park improvements of his third term, was finished.

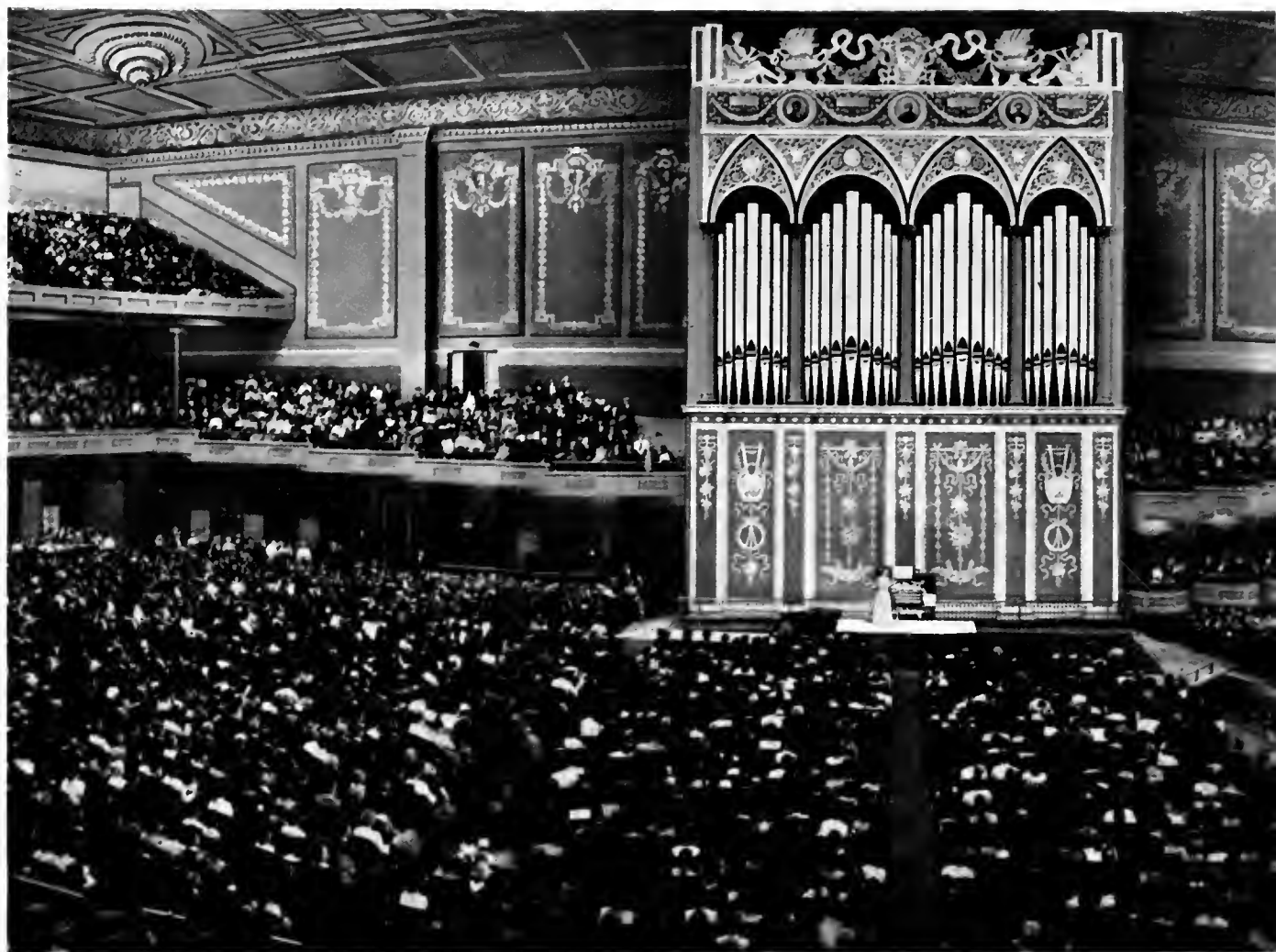
The European trip, as was to become apparent at a later date, changed Mayor Speer from a strong partisan to a non-partisan in city government. No one ever again heard him say that he believed in a partisan government for municipalities. The journey had grounded in his mind some ideas which conservative business acquaintances classed as socialistic. He had begun to think, not alone of entertainment for the masses, but of a method by which their sufferings might be alleviated, and better living conditions brought to their hearths. How this idea of social service was worked out with characteristic Speerian individuality, a later chapter will show. It is enough at this point to say that the City of Denver suffered a shocking and irretrievable loss in his premature death, just as he had entered upon an era of constructive development in which his great craving was, not to gratify the soul of the artist, but to satisfy the instinct to serve his fellow man, an impulse always present in his nature, as manifested by his many labors to give pleasure and entertainment to his fellow citizens. In his first two terms the flower of his genius was but half opened; in the last Denver received a brief but dazzling view of it in full bloom.



Cherry Creek Was Incurrigible Until It Felt the Builder's Hand.



Many Administrations Had Vainly Tried to Solve the Problem.



The Municipal Organ Will Ever Testify to the Indor  
Miss Margaret Wilson Sing



able Will and Persistence of Denver's Great Mayor.  
at the Organ Dedication.



Cherry Creek Subjected—A Before-and-After Contrast.



City Hall Sat in Squalid Dejection Upon Its Ruining Banks.



## CHAPTER IV.

*Mayor Speer's Outstanding Works—The Auditorium His Favorite Creation—An Unparalleled Entertainment Program—Love of Children Emphasized—Installation of the Organ—Cherry Creek and Speer Boulevard—The Sunken Gardens—History of the Civic Center Project—A Period of Stagnation—Construction Commenced With the Return of Speer—The Colonnade of Civic Benefactors, Built Without Taxation.*

**T**HREE GREAT, material achievements, any one of which was sufficient to have brought imperishable fame to its author, marked the administrations of Mayor Speer. The first of these was the construction of the municipal auditorium. The second was the transformation of Cherry Creek from a public dumping ground into the handsomest boulevard in the city. The third was the acquisition and definition of the civic center.

These works deserve a special chapter because each was typical of its creator; each is a living example of the manner in which his mind conceived and his will executed his visions. In their progress toward maturity one can follow the purpose of the builder; first the idea, vague and unformed. It might be foreshadowed in a single sentence, to all appearance uttered carelessly and without definite purpose. Months would elapse with an occasional mention of the subject to a friend. Others passed it by or speedily let it glide from their memories, but it grew day by day, week by week, month by month, in the brain of the author. Mayor Speer would ponder for months over his plans, turning them over and over, dissecting them, analyzing them, constructing them anew, until at last he came forward with the plan complete, dazzling in its imaginative content, yet practicable and workable to the last detail. The hearer might consider it visionary until he undertook to pick flaws in the scheme. To every question propounded, Mayor Speer had a definite answer; to every objection a well-digested argument. This was the secret of his success in small things as well as great. He never submitted a proposition for final judgment, whether to the voters or to an organization or committee, that was not well-nigh unassailable. He might invite suggestion and criticism from individuals in order to stimulate his conception; he might, and often did, abandon half-formed ideas when a basic flaw was pointed out; but when his plans had matured to his satisfaction he was adamant in his opinions. It is a tribute to his mental stature that Mayor Speer did not confine himself to a few in thus testing the mettle of his ideas. They first had to run the gauntlet at home, for he depended to a very large extent upon the calm, dispassionate, well-balanced judgments of Mrs. Speer, who, although she never took part publicly in any city affairs, exercised a powerful influence in their decision. The mayor's closest political advisers; a prominent business man who happened to drop in upon him; a newspaper reporter calling for the morning's news; the members of his official family, were drawn out unconsciously by some chance remark dropped during a conversation. The visitor might think that his comment was of little moment to the big man in the swivel chair, but the Mayor listened eagerly for every word, weighed it carefully and stored it away for future reflection. After passing through such a crucible it is small wonder that his ideas, when ready for assay by the voters, stood the acid test.

The first great material improvement was designed to meet the social needs of the community. At the same time, under Mayor Speer's direction, the auditorium served as a medium for bringing to the masses a higher culture.



Denver's Civic Center in 1919, from the Dome of the State Capitol. Court of Civic Benefactors on the Left.





Section of the Civic Center Site as It Was When Robert W. Speer First Became Mayor.

## ROBERT W. SPEER

The auditorium was the first of the three to be brought to a successful conclusion. In order to clear the decks for the erection of the auditorium, Mayor Speer was forced to pass through another of those bitter legal battles which marked almost every step of his official career. The city's power to provide by charter for the erection of an auditorium, to purchase a site therefor and to issue bonds to discharge the indebtedness created thereby, was described in the case of *Denver vs. Hallett*, 34 Colorado, 393, a case that has since become the leading reference throughout the country in actions at law based upon similar circumstances. City Attorney Lindsley in this instance referred to the ancient English custom of holding court under the trees and the subsequent necessity of erecting public buildings with popular funds, for the convenience of the people.

The people voted \$400,000 in bonds for construction of the auditorium on May 17, 1904, and the issue was made July 2, of the same year. Plans were drawn by Robert Willison, then city building inspector, and it was opened in July, 1908, by the Democratic National Convention. The building was constructed with the purpose of meeting every requirement, and in this it has been an admirable success. In four hours it may be changed from one large room, 246 feet long by 145 feet wide, seating 12,000 people, into a theatre, seating 3,300 people, with a hippodrome stage. The total cost of the auditorium was \$650,000, the excess having been made up from general funds.

The auditorium was the favorite child of Mayor Speer's brain. He never tired of devising new form of entertainment for the people, for the most part free entertainments. Nothing short of illness or absence from the city could keep him away from the Sunday musical concerts, and his face, wreathed in smiles, was as familiar to patrons of these concerts as the building itself.

The first municipal theatre in America was conducted there during the winter seasons of 1909-1910 and 1910-1911, twenty engagements being played each winter under direction of the Shuberts. Prices were limited by the city from twenty-five cents to one dollar.

To give an idea of the multitudinous uses made of the auditorium, it may be stated that in it have been held athletic carnivals, playground festivals, municipal dances, wrestling matches, a three-ring circus, dog and poultry shows, a horse show, revival meetings, lectures, dramatic and grand opera productions, concerts, mask and charity balls, industrial expositions, pure food and automobile shows, flower shows, lodge initiations and military maneuvers, society and Elk fairs, Boy Scout exhibitions, apple shows, surgical operations, election returns and returns from world's series baseball games, Christmas tree celebrations, not to mention the winter band concerts, organ concerts, daily summer organ recitals, and moving picture shows.

Free band concerts by the Denver Municipal Band, organized by Mayor Speer and maintained by the city, were held during the winter seasons each Sunday, and lasted until the installation of the great organ during his last term. In 1911 Mayor Speer broke another precedent by giving motion picture shows in connection with the band concerts, of which there were two each Sunday. Motion picture men opposed the plan, but when they found that the shows were to be limited to educational or travel pictures they withdrew their protests. Instead of hurting private business these shows stimulated patronage for them.

One of the most remarkable undertakings was the presentation of a horse show. As the trunks of a theatrical company were trundled from the building, one evening after the close of an engagement, the wide street doors in the rear of the stage were thrown open, and one hundred and fifty contractors' wagons were driven upon the hippodrome stage. In a few hours one thousand cubic yards of clay had been dumped upon the concrete floor. The wagons disappeared, to reappear a few hours later, loaded with green tan bark. The



Children's Fountain, City Park, a Result of the European Trip.



Mayor Speer's Last Great Vision Was the Mount Evans Drive.

## A CITY BUILDER

auditorium crew worked all night and the following day, and when the horse show opened in the evening arrangements were perfect to the last detail.

The moving picture presentations were distinctly Speerian. The Mayor was a firm believer in spectacular effects. In a room behind the picture screen he had stationed a crew of stage hands, equipped with noise effects to furnish realism. On one occasion a battle scene was presented and a battery from the Colorado National Guard, located in this room, fired cannon continuously during the performance. The roar of the gatlings was deafening, the flashes of rifles were visible through the screen, and powder smoke, drifting out over the audience, thrilled the spectators with the realism of war.

Not the least interesting of the entertainments was the free concert given by Madame Schumann-Heink on January 24, 1912, as the result of her attendance at a municipal band concert the previous Sunday. The prima donna had come to the city to keep a concert engagement. The night following her contract engagement she appeared at the request of Mayor Speer and, although notice was given only on the day of the free concert, fourteen thousand people crowded into the building to hear her, while between twenty and twenty-five thousand were unable to gain admission.

It was the policy of Mayor Speer to reserve boxes for the aged, mothers with children, and for cripples, at all free celebrations. He was in evidence on each of these occasions, kept a sharp lookout for persons of this description, and personally ushered them to boxes. Many entertaining anecdotes are told by the auditorium attendants to illustrate the fondness of the Mayor for children. After one particularly successful Christmas tree celebration, held in 1917, when ten thousand boxes of candy were given away to the children, an attendant found him standing at a side entrance, surrounded by a group of grimy, tearful boys. They had been unable to secure admission and were bewailing the fact that they had received no candy.

"Well, never mind," said the big-hearted Mayor, "you go get some candy at the store," and he passed a dollar to each of the youngsters.

During another Christmas celebration the building manager caught him on several different occasions, opening side doors to let in a few more children. As all doors had been closed some time before, on order of the Mayor himself, the manager remonstrated somewhat after this fashion:

"Boss, you positively must not let anyone else in. You gave me my orders, but you are violating them yourself. It is dangerous to admit anyone else."

"Oh, these are only a few little boys, George," was the reply. "They want to see the Christmas tree, too, and they won't take up much room."

Mayor Speer never regarded the auditorium as completed until the municipal organ had been installed. The idea was first broached by him during 1911, and his final budget for the second term carried an appropriation of \$50,000 for the purpose of buying and installing the instrument. After the expiration of his term the spirit to undo all that Speer had done, so frequently manifested by successors of public officials who have made great records, caused the revocation of this contract. Upon the re-election of Mayor Speer, in 1916, he immediately undertook to secure the organ. There were no available funds for the purpose at that time, so he appealed to public patriotism, as he had often done before. R. W. Speer rarely called upon the people of Denver in this way without securing what he wanted, so great was their confidence in his judgment. The Mayor personally raised \$20,000 and then asked the Denver Rotary Club to complete the fund. As a rotarian he went forth again and was materially responsible in securing the remainder of the money. While the organ was in course of construction he ordered the redecoration of the entire auditorium and perfection of its acoustical properties, at a cost of \$26,000, employing a

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technical engineer for this purpose. This was a positive necessity and did much toward making the organ the success that it has proved.

Instead of a \$50,000 organ, the people of Denver found themselves, after a wait of four years from the time of its first suggestion, possessed of an \$85,000 instrument. The Mayor engaged as organist a man of national reputation, and on March 21 and 22, 1918, the mighty instrument, greatest in volume and tone quality of its kind, was dedicated by Evan Williams and Miss Margaret Wilson, daughter of President Wilson.

Almost the last plan arranged by Mayor Speer before his death was the presentation, the following winter, by first-class concert or operatic singers, of a series of musical concerts at popular prices. Ten concerts were arranged, and season tickets sold at twenty-five cents per concert. The Municipal Artists Series is just closing as this book goes to press. Mayor Speer did not live to enjoy them, but they have served a noble purpose in bringing to people of limited means a brighter and sweeter experience in life.

While construction of the auditorium has been placed first in point of completion, it was really the Cherry Creek improvement that gave citizens confidence in the judgment and ability of Mayor Speer. Enough of this work was accomplished during 1907 and 1908 to give the people an idea of what the improvement would mean to the city.

Just how long the vision of a walled and boulevarded Cherry Creek lay ripening in the brain of Mayor Speer it is difficult to say. Ordinance No. 86 of the series of 1903 defined and established the channel of Cherry Creek. Inasmuch as Mr. Speer was president of the board of public works at that time, and Ordinance No. 104 of the series of 1904 authorized and established Cherry Creek Drive on the northeasterly line of Cherry Creek from the south line of West Colfax Avenue to the west line of Broadway, it must have germinated soon after he became president of the board.

Up to that time the problem of confining this demon stream had been agitated from the date of the first great flood, May 19 and 20, 1864, when the City Hall safe, with all city records and property deeds, was lost in the quicksands. The early settlers of Denver City had been warned by the Indians of the treacherous nature of the seemingly innocent creek. Although only carrying a streamlet a few inches deep most of the year, it has flooded thirteen times since Denver was established, five of the floods causing considerable damage. Millions of dollars worth of property have been swept away or otherwise destroyed, and the question of confining the creek or diverting it to another channel was brought before the city authorities every few years after the date of the first flood. No definite conclusion was ever reached, however, until Mayor Speer took office in 1904.

At this time not only did the danger to property exist as a constant menace, but the banks of the stream had been utilized as city dumps. They were the repository of ashes, tin cans, rubbish, manure piles, and were unsightly and unsanitary to an alarming degree.

Ordinance No. 104, Series of 1904, was followed by Ordinance No. 41, Series of 1906, creating a special assessment district for construction of the retaining walls and drive. There was a serious fight on this, as there was on every big improvement ever undertaken by Mayor Speer. Political antagonists made of it a favorite subject of attack. Mayor Speer was accused of being a large owner of lands adjacent to the creek, and the assertion was made that he would make himself independently wealthy if the project went through. In the face of this opposition he put through the city council, including the two mentioned, twelve ordinances defining and establishing the Cherry Creek boulevards, and assessing adjoining property for the acquisition of land. One of the ordinances was repealed by the succeeding administration, but, all told, \$424,644.23 was paid for land, of which the city and county paid \$181,387.25 and property owners \$243,256.98.

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The great constructive work on the Cherry Creek improvement took place from 1907 to 1911, inclusive. Up to December 31, 1913, there had been spent on Cherry Creek improvements \$493,611.58, of which \$36,398.19 was spent during 1912 and 1913, largely for repairs after the last Cherry Creek flood, due to wooden piles under the railroad bridges below Blake Street. Of the total amount, \$198,930.03 was raised by special assessment, and the remainder, with the exception noted, paid out from various operating funds of the city. This represented investment in permanent improvements from general funds.

When Mayor Speer went out of office in 1912, Speer Boulevard, so named in 1910 by the council in recognition of the worth of the plan, had been constructed and parked between Blake and Downing streets on the northeasterly side of the creek. The name Cherry Creek Drive was given the portion of the double boulevard lying on the southwesterly bank, which had been graded and curbed from West Eleventh avenue to Broadway.

This great work speedily became recognized as the most beautiful boulevard in Denver, and so stands today. During construction the park department kept pace with the highway builders. A line of trees was planted and the sloping terraces to the concrete creek walls were improved by lawn and shrubbery. Trailing vines dropped over the walls and hung suspended above the water. The ugly, repulsive stream became an entrancing spot that attracted visitors from all parts of the country.

When the land was acquired for Speer Boulevard and the Cherry Creek Drive, several triangles were included in the purchase. One of these tracts lies south of Eleventh avenue, and at one time was part of the channel. It was below the level of the street grade, filled with weeds and the trash that one finds in a city dump. Mayor Speer ordered that a sunken garden be designed for this place, and the park and highway departments performed the labor necessary to carry out the scheme. The result was the sunken gardens of Cherry Creek, regarded by many citizens as the most beautiful park in Denver. The park consists of a formal garden, to which access is gained by steps leading downward from the drive. A pool was created and a handsome pavilion built on its west side. The lighting system employed is especially attractive. The work was done during 1910 and 1911.

Mayor Speer planned a natural park south of the formal gardens in 1912, but the work was interrupted by the change in government. He carried out this idea in 1916, when re-elected. The later addition is as beautiful as the earlier effort, yet absolutely a different style of landscape architecture. A forest effect was created, many evergreens having been used to carry out the wild aspect. A natural rock grotto, which sets off to splendid advantage a miniature waterfall, lies at the head of a winding streamlet, the course of which is broken by tiny pools, surrounded by rocks.

During 1917 Mayor Speer opened the drive on the south side of Cherry Creek from Broadway to Logan, and the following year continued it to Marion street. A twenty-one foot, surfaced driveway was laid out and bordered on either side by a forest belt, the whole being eighty feet in width. Hedges of lilacs border the drive, while, beginning at the creek wall, a bank of shrubbery and trees covers the terrace. One section of this drive is planted in evergreens, another in oak, while still another contains a variety of trees. Today the forest belt is well defined and forms a pleasure drive of rare beauty. It was ever Mayor Speer's way to add to whatever he had undertaken. He never seemed to run out of ideas. Years after the citizens thought that he had exhausted the possibilities of an improvement he would complete some new feature that immeasurably increased the worth of the work. It was so both in the Cherry Creek improvement and in the auditorium. No one, after this achievement, even his bitterest enemies, attempted to dispute the genius of Mayor Speer, and it gained him that faith of his fellow citizens that made possible other accomplishments, each as gigantic in its way as the Cherry Creek work.





The Colonnade of Civic Benefactors and Open-Air Theatre.



The Transverse Axis of the Civic Center from the Colonnade.





Rear View of the Stage, Colonnade of Civic Benefactors.



The Cloistral Promenade.



Colonnade and the Capitol.

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We now come to the third great undertaking by Mayor Speer for the beautification of Denver. The Civic Center project had its inception shortly after he assumed office as chief executive in 1904, yet so bitter and prolonged was the fight against this plan by a group of tax-paying citizens that, at the close of his second term in 1912, the land alone had been acquired. Public improvements on the scale of the Civic Center invariably have powerful and influential opponents, yet it is doubtful if any mayor underwent a struggle more prolonged and trying to the soul than this. It required all his wonderful tenacity, all his great tact and diplomacy, all of his indomitable will power, to bring the first step to a successful conclusion.

The Civic Center project was first brought to public attention on November 30, 1904, in a letter addressed to Mayor Speer by the Art Commission. The latter body recommended the adoption of a city plan long before that subject came before the voters of other cities of this country. The Mayor instructed the commission to secure the services of a competent expert to suggest a plan, and Charles Mulford Robinson was selected for this purpose. On January 19, 1906, Mr. Robinson's proposition was presented to the voters, but was defeated because of the expense involved. It suggested general improvements, as well as acquisition of several blocks of land lying between the State House and the Court House for a Civic Center.

The matter was kept before the public by the Art Commission. Mayor Speer, after having addressed letters to the leading business men of Denver, urging creation of a Civic Center, appointed an independent committee to make a detailed report. Those serving on the committee were: Charles MacA. Willcox, chairman; J. K. Mullen, Chester S. Morey, David H. Moffat, Jerome S. Riche, J. A. Thatcher, Frederick J. Chamberlin, Armour C. Anderson, John S. Flower, Jacob Fillius, Reinhard Schuetze and Henry Read. The committee unanimously adopted the Civic Center suggestion of Mr. Robinson in a report to the Mayor in February, 1907.

About this time, Frederick Macmonnies, who had visited Denver to make a study for the Pioneer Monument, suggested a Civic Center to include the Bates Triangle, the property between Broadway and Bannock as far south as Fourteenth street, as well as a strip south of this large enough to fulfill the conditions of a cruciform plaza.

Inasmuch as all lands in the Civic Center proper were included in the East Denver Park District, it was agreed that the expense of acquiring the land should be borne by this district. The other districts had paid for their parks through special assessment, but the East Denver district, the oldest and richest in the city, had received its parks by gift or by payment from the general city funds. Included in this district was the City Park, largest and best developed of any in Denver, as well as the beautiful Cheesman Park, with its superb mountain view and marble pavilion.

In April, 1909, the Park Commission selected the land to be acquired, less than twenty-five per cent. of the realty holders protesting. These objectors took the matter before the state and federal courts, and it was not until March 4, 1918, that the Colorado Supreme Court disposed of the final litigation to make the entire city pay for the Civic Center.

The Civic Center proper covers approximately thirteen acres, lying west of the State Capitol building, but, in addition to this, the following land purchases were included in the bond issue: Eighty-acre addition to City Park; one block addition to Cheesman Park; six playgrounds; five triangles for small parks; and land for opening Park avenue to Colfax, opening and widening of Forty-sixth avenue from Colorado Boulevard to the Platte River, York street to the northern city limits, Thirty-second Avenue Boulevard from Steele street to Colorado Boulevard, Seventh Avenue Boulevard from High street to Colorado

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Boulevard, Marion Street Boulevard and Colorado Boulevard from Cherry Creek to the northern city limits.

The amount appropriated for acquisition of the Civic Center lands proper was \$1,814,539.41. The bond issue of \$2,685,000 was purchased by H. L. Doherty & Co., of New York, in April, 1912.

Mayor Henry J. Arnold, who succeeded Mayor Speer in office, immediately began to wreck buildings then standing on the Civic Center, from which the city was deriving considerable rent. He announced, without having adopted a detailed plan of construction, that the city would erect four buildings to correspond in size and architecture with the Public Library, one to become an administration building, one a court building, one a treasury building, and the fourth a building to house various city boards. Under this plan the present Court House was to have been sold and the present City Hall converted into fire and police general headquarters. Fortunately, from an artistic standpoint, the citizens tired of the Arnold regime before a year had elapsed. Commission form was adopted and the danger from this particular form of desecration averted.

The destinies of the Civic Center then passed into the hands of the Commissioner of Property. Commissioner Otto F. Thum was the first incumbent. Although city clerk during the Arnold administration, he was wise enough to see that the purposes of the Center would be destroyed if it was crowded with an half-dozen uniform and severely classical buildings. Commissioner Thum called in Frederick Law Olmsted and asked for a comprehensive improvement plan. The latter submitted such a plan, differing somewhat from the Macmonnies plan, but holding to the general idea. During Commissioner Thum's term all the buildings on the main body of the Center, not already razed, were torn down and the ground planted in lawn. In this form it remained through the one-year term of Commissioner of Property L. C. Greenlee, the efforts of three administrations having brought the Civic Center no further toward completion than the open plaza state.

It was this failure to solve the Civic Center problem that was largely instrumental in inducing Mayor Speer again to become a candidate for mayor in 1916. The people, too, had tired of having nothing accomplished, and the desire to see the master builder develop the ideas of civic beauty, which all knew he had formulated before he left office in 1912, was an important contributing factor in his re-election.

The public did not have long to wait. One of Mayor Speer's first acts was to summon to Denver E. H. Bennett, the Chicago landscape architect, with instructions to evolve a Civic Center plan upon which all could agree. The present plan, with the exception of the Bates Triangle design for the Voorhies Memorial entrance, is Mr. Bennett's. He recommended a transverse axis to bisect the main axis at right angles. The splendid and striking scheme for the construction of a Colonnade of Civic Benefactors and an open-air theater, however, bears the unmistakable imprint of the Speer mind. It was, in fact, his idea, the fulfillment of a plan that was foreshadowed in an address delivered by Mayor Speer at the banquet in honor of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Chamber of Commerce, May 24, 1909. His words then have a familiar ring, which will be recognized in his later speeches, and illustrate again that persistence with which he clung to his opinions.

"At best, life is short," he said. "We want the good opinion of our fellowmen while here, and to be kindly remembered after we have passed on. I know of no better way than to cultivate and unfold some blossoms along life's path, add rest stations, play stations and beauty spots along the way. The time will come when men will be judged more by their disbursements than by their accumulations. Denver has been kind to most of us by giving to some health, to some wealth, to some happiness, and to some a combination of all. We can pay a part of this debt by making our city more attractive."

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Work was begun within a few months on the Colonnade of Civic Benefactors and the balustrades of the Center. Before his death Mayor Speer said: "I want to finish the Civic Center before the end of my term. The people look to me to do it. But, at least, I have got it so far defined that nobody will be able to change the main plan."

To encourage the spirit of public giving, he planned to place upon the colonnade the names of those, living or dead, who should enrich the cultural or artistic life of Denver by some substantial gift, the names to be selected by a board of Denver citizens.

Mayor Speer expected that, with the exception of the city and county building, facing the State Capitol on the west, all improvement of the Civic Center would be without taxation. Payment for the colonnade, Greek theater and balustrades was made from a special fund, created from the annual payment of the Telephone Company for use of the streets. Mayor Speer secured an agreement from the company in 1912 that it should pay the city two per cent. of its gross income. Special provision was made that this payment should not be considered as having prejudiced the rights of the city in the matter of a franchise settlement, for the company was then operating and has continued since to operate without any franchise. The first payment was made, but the succeeding administration refused to accept it. The money remained in the hands of the city for four years, every administration showing itself incapable either of accepting or refunding the money. The company made no further payment until 1916, when Mayor Speer revived the subject. Officials of the company offered to start the payments on the old basis that year, but Mayor Speer insisted that back payments for two years should be made. The company finally agreed to do so, and the money thus derived was placed in a special Civic Center fund. The cost of the colonnade, \$185,000, was paid from this fund.

The extraordinary stimulative effect that Mayor Speer's speech, "Give While You Live," had upon wealthy citizens of Denver, in which he announced the establishment of a Court of Civic Benefactors, will be detailed in a later chapter.

The Voorhies entrance, to be created through a bequest left by J. H. P. Voorhies, a Denver pioneer, will be completed this year. Mayor Speer died before any decision had been made as to the design, but his ideas had been expressed before this occurred.

The broken column, emblematic of the final interruption in the life of the builder, actually represented the end of Mayor Speer's work. When he passed away the columns of the colonnade had been erected to half their destined height.

## CHAPTER V.

*The Failure of Mr. Speer as a Newspaper Editor—The Second Trip Abroad—Political Battles—The Historic Struggle With Senator Patterson—Defeat of Mayor Speer's Senatorial Ambitions—The Success of Arnold and the True Version of the "Crowbar Incident"—Junking of the Speer Machine—Failure of Mayor Arnold and Commission Form of Government.*

A FEW MONTHS before the conclusion of Mayor Speer's second term he acquired control of the Denver Times, one of the city's leading dailies. He stepped from office to assume its management, and here we have to record the only failure he ever made of any problem he attacked. A great many persons, among them trained newspaper editors, believed that Mayor Speer would prove successful as a journalist. Mayor Speer had shown repeatedly that he was capable of brilliant, unusual ideas, and it was upon this known fact that the predictions were based. But the hand of the potter had moulded a vessel, and the fire had imparted to it unyielding form. The plastic quality of the clay had been destroyed. It could not be reshaped.

Some of the very qualities that made Mr. Speer great as a mayor, his sometimes obstinate will, his almost fanatical adherence to an ideal, his inability to adapt himself to sudden changes in viewpoint, foredoomed him to failure. He had considerable genius as a publicity man, but lacked editorial training. The establishment of Municipal Facts, first issued on February 20, 1909, was a product of the publicity agent. He wished to present the facts of his administrative work to the citizens; to instruct the public upon the intricacies and accomplishments of city government; to win over friends for his multifarious plans. He relied upon others to do the editorial work.

Mayor Speer had suffered so much abuse as a public official that the idea of criticizing his successor was repugnant to him. The paper lacked the pungent, breezy air of the successful daily. After a brief experience he gave up the editorial ghost. His manner of doing so was characteristic. In a brief statement he announced his withdrawal from the newspaper business, and acknowledged that he was not fitted for the work.

Nearly all of Mayor Speer's speeches were short, pithy and epigrammatic. He believed that no public speech should require more than five minutes for delivery, and it was only when he had some message of vital importance to convey that he broke this rule himself. His proclamations were models of brevity. His secretaries all had sad experiences in attempting to write letters or messages for him. The Mayor was scrupulous in answering every letter that came into his office, no matter from whom or upon what subject. Sometimes, when rushed for time he would ask his secretary to compose a public message. His secretary for the first eight years of his mayoralty terms was Colonel John S. Irby, a clever and gifted writer and newspaper man. The latter obtained considerable amusement in retailing accounts of the fate met by his most painstaking efforts. After spending an hour or two on a production of perhaps two hundred words, in order that it might be couched in perfect diction, yet carry the requisite "punch," he would submit the composition to Mayor Speer. The latter would glance over it, and then exclaim: "No! No! It's all right for you to write that way, but that's not the way I say things. It doesn't sound like me and people would know it as soon as they read this." He would then tear the proffered message apart and, in the end, produce an epigrammatic gem, dis-

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tinctly Speerian and, as his would-be imitator was always ready to admit, something better than his own. Every secretary who ever attempted to write Speer messages had the same experience.

Mayor Speer did not compose easily. When he had something to write he would shut himself up, allow no interruptions, and work on the matter in hand doggedly until it had been finished. He turned the sheet of paper sideways and wrote in a copper-plate hand, vertically to the plane of his shoulders, with an effort that was sometimes painful to witness. It was a constant annoyance to him to compose, but he preferred to do so, even when immersed in more important work, rather than have anything go out from him to the public that was not just as he would have spoken.

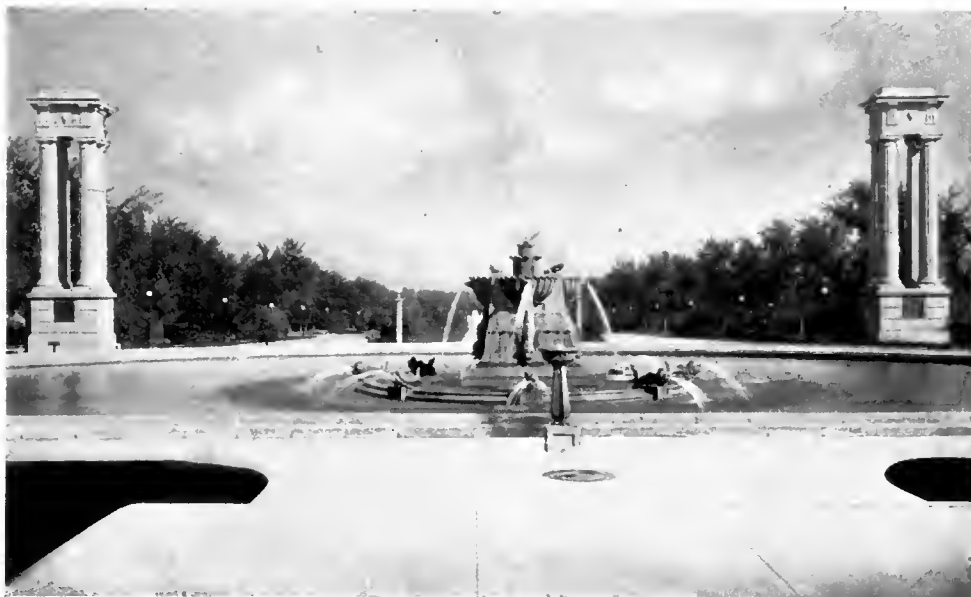
Soon after Mr. Speer's retirement from his newspaper activities, he and Mrs. Speer, in company with a small party of friends, started upon a tour of the world that lasted seven months. The party visited the Far East, Egypt and Europe. Again Mr. Speer, although ostensibly a tourist, traveled as a student. The government of the various cities that he visited interested him far more than the suggestions of Baedeker; the manner in which people lived, and were happy or sorrowful, was of more moment in his eyes than the dusty, flat-nosed gods in heathen temples. We have a reflection of this in a later speech on "Happiness," in which he undertook to prove that happiness is, after all, a condition of the mind. This speech we have reproduced in the Appendix.

Years spent in the hardening school of politics had given him a certain grim finish, observable when he was annoyed by some obstruction to his plans, or when work he had ordered performed was done in a perfunctory manner. During his first and second terms he was a man whom none of his subordinates cared to anger, for his judgment was swift and cold; yet, despite this, he was just. He was by nature a battler, and years of violent newspaper attacks had increased his inclination to strike back. To a man his equal in mentality or in position, he was a relentless foe, but when dealing with one beneath him in position or ability he was inclined to forgive and forget an injury. During his first two terms he had as his leading opponent Senator T. M. Patterson, owner of the Rocky Mountain News and Denver Times. Here was a foeman worthy his steel, but one who did not scruple to maintain a vindictive warfare. Some of the political struggles between the two are historic.

One of the most interesting political contests of his career took place in Denver at the state convention of 1906. During all his administrations as mayor there was a division in the Democratic party, one faction following him, the other Senator Patterson. At the time mentioned, Mayor Speer had control of the city government, but Senator Patterson had secured a majority in the state convention. There were contesting delegations from Denver County and, after the most bitter imaginable debate, Senator Patterson accomplished the now famous "spewing out" coup, by which the Speer delegation was denied admission to the convention, told that its members were not Democrats, and advised to give their support to the Republican ticket. Mayor Speer accepted the dictum.

"Very well," he replied. "We are good Democrats and we will prove this by obeying the mandate of the party as represented by the ruling of this convention. We will do just as you tell us."

In token of their proposed course the Speer followers ordered struck off thousands of small tin "meat axes," tipped on the edges with red, to signify that they had dug up the hatchet. They went forth upon the warpath so successfully that the Republican state ticket, headed by Henry A. Buchtel, was elected. Two years later, at the next Democratic state convention, held in Pueblo, contesting delegations again went forth from Denver, but this time Robert W. Speer was victorious, and the convention "spewed out"



Sullivan Memorial Gate, Esplanade Entrance to City Park.



The Esplanade Before the Erection of the Sullivan Gate.



The Electric Fountain, City Park,  
One of His Early Works.



The Bucking Broncho, a Late Gift,  
Inspired by Mayor Speer.



"Wynken, Blynken and Nod", Ordered Just Before the Mayor's Death.



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the Patterson followers with gusto. The complete state and congressional Democratic tickets were elected.

Again these two strong antagonists met in the halls of the state legislature during the early months of 1911, when Mayor Speer became a candidate for United States Senator to succeed Charles J. Hughes, who had died in office. Every Speer supporter wore in his buttonhole as a sign of his aggressive partisanship a golden spearhead upon which was stamped the word "Speer." The struggle went on in the most unrelenting fashion for four months, Mayor Speer failing of election by one vote. Senator Patterson, though the mayor of Denver was the strongest man before the legislature, succeeded in forming a combination among the other applicants for the office and, by a miracle, in holding them solid until the last. The result was no election and Colorado had only one representative in the United States Senate for two years.

In the spring of 1912 Mayor Speer received the most complete and apparently final defeat of his career. He was not a candidate for re-election, but supported for mayor the city engineer, John B. Hunter, later Commissioner of Improvements under commission form of government. Opposed to the latter was the Republican candidate, Dewey C. Bailey, afterward Manager of Safety during Mayor Speer's third term, and Henry J. Arnold, the reform candidate. The latter had been created politically by Mayor Speer.

The campaign propaganda was aimed at the very thing that had made Denver a real city, her wonderful advance in public improvements. His enemies used the argument of high taxes to encompass the defeat of the Speer candidate. The people had tired of the long reign of Mayor Speer at City Hall and had grown restive. But the straw that turned the scale was one of those queer incidents of chance that often inflame an entire population.

Assessor Arnold had been elected to office, but in the fall of 1911 the Colorado Supreme Court handed down its decision in the Cassidy case, which definitely consolidated the city and county, in fact as well as in theory. This ruling terminated Assessor Arnold's term of office and gave the Mayor power to appoint an assessor. Arnold, although created politically by Mayor Speer, already had begun to deal with Senator Patterson. The Mayor removed Arnold from office and appointed in his stead Hiram E. Hilts. On the evening that this appointment was sent to the council for confirmation, Mr. Hilts, having made arrangements with one of the district judges to be sworn in that night, went to the Court House with several friends for that purpose. One of the city councilmen had telephoned Assessor Arnold of the confirmation, and the latter also went to the Court House in order that he might, if possible, cause Hilts to use force in securing possession of the office, and so establish grounds for a legal conflict. Mr. Hilts had taken the oath of office and had descended to the first floor of the Court House when one of the janitors informed him that the Assessor and some friends had arrived and barricaded the doors to the Assessor's office. Mr. Hilts, although instructed by Mayor Speer under no circumstances to employ any force to secure possession, but, on the contrary, to await a *quo warranto* proceeding on the following morning, re-entered the Court House elevator and went to the third floor. He found that Arnold had piled office furniture against the doors. The upper half of these doors were of glass and the contending parties could see and hear one another plainly. In the excitement of the moment a dispute took place, and the Hilts party forgot discretion. One of Hilts' companions, who carried in his hand a short, rubber ferrule, laid it against the glass, pulled back one end and snapped it. The pane fell in with a crash. This man reached through the opening, turned the key in the lock, walked in and said, "Hello, Henry."

"Hello, George," was the reply, and the two shook hands. Assessor Arnold then walked out with his friends. This incident was seized upon by Senator Patterson as excel-

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lent political material. The next morning's News carried a sensational story to the effect that Assessor Arnold's door had been forced with a crowbar. Gunmen, revolvers and other harrowing details were thrown in to make a hair-raising story. Assessor Arnold was martyred. Soon afterward, when public feeling had been aroused to a high pitch, Senator Patterson called a mass meeting, to be held on the State House grounds. Ten thousand attended and a demonstration against Mayor Speer was staged. This was spread broadcast over the country. One of the leading American periodicals carried a sensational story of the rebellion of Denver citizens against their Mayor, written by George Creel, then editorial writer on the Rocky Mountain News, later chairman of the Committee on Public Information in Washington.

The result of this campaign, conducted with much ingenuity and imaginative ability, was the election of Henry J. Arnold by a vote of 40,000, the largest ever cast for a mayoralty candidate in the history of the city. Every candidate on the ticket, from mayor to constable, was swept in on the tidal wave.

The Speer machine, so long dominant and triumphant, was scrapped as junk. It is not necessary to refer to succeeding administrations between the end of Mayor Speer's second term and the beginning of his third, further than to say that the same influences and the same newspapers that had supported Arnold brought about a change in the charter on February 14, 1913, that created commission form of government, and elected some of the commissioners in May, 1913. The ill-starred reform mayor lasted less than one year. Two terms of commission government followed, but this form proved an unfortunate experiment in Denver, whatever its success in other cities. Practically no public improvements of note, other than those inaugurated by Mayor Speer, were carried to completion by these various administrations.

When the people began to tire of commission government, during the winter of 1915-1916, the name of Mayor Speer was brought forward prominently again. Business interests and thousands of individuals importuned him to run for mayor. He consented to do so, but only upon a charter which he himself should draw, and which would name him as mayor. He was induced to take this course for the purpose of completing work started by him, but interrupted by the events of 1912.



## CHAPTER VI.

*Personal Traits of Mayor Speer—His Secret Service—Illustrations of His Thoughtful Kindness—The Mayor and the Ragged Urchin—His Fondness for Flowers and Birds—The Poplars on Speer Boulevard—A Political Machine That Remained True Under an Unprecedented Strain—Analysis of the Speer Amendment—The Vindication of Mayor Speer.*

**B**EFORE TAKING UP again the thread of Mayor Speer's official life it will not come amiss to pause for a while and to consider Speer—the man.

Many a man or woman, no matter how low his or her estate, was helped by his influence, or, if need be, by his money, who never knew from what source this assistance came. This was characteristic of him throughout his life. He had friends in every walk of life and every section of the city who were devoted to him. His great influence was used to help and uplift, rather than to destroy or injure. Mayor Speer's method of securing all the facts about anyone who needed assistance, or about details of government, was thorough. In the former instance he sent for men who could tell him what he wanted to know. In the latter he secured his most valuable and reliable information through a secret service of his own.

During his first two administrations he constantly had a trusted individual in his employ, who, in some manner, checked up the work of the various departments. This man kept away from City Hall except when on an investigating trip. On one occasion he might commit a misdemeanor, go through the city jail, the police court, and the county jail, but after a few days in prison would receive a pardon from the Mayor. He was testing the efficiency of the service. At another time he might appear in the guise of a taxpayer, seeking knowledge, or a complainant registering a complaint against some nuisance, in order that he might try out the effectiveness of the health department employees, the inspection officials or clerks. Again he might gain admittance to the county hospital as a patient.

Throughout his entire life Mayor Speer never lost the buoyant spirit of youth, without which no man ever attains real greatness. He was as capable of enthusiasm as the veriest boy. A little incident that illustrates this admirably occurred during his second term, while he and Mrs. Speer were traveling in the private car of a prominent railroad official with a party of friends. The car had been sidetracked at Ogden, Utah, and all of the party except the Mayor and his wife had left to see the city or attend to business. As they sat there in the pleasant sunshine the Mayor's attention was attracted to a ragged urchin who stood upon the right-of-way and gazed at the car with a peculiar, fixed expression.

"Kate," said Mr. Speer, "do you see that boy? I know what he's thinking. I remember, once, when I was a boy, the private car of the president of the Pennsylvania railroad came into the yards. I stood and looked at it for hours, hoping that somebody would ask me to come in and see it—but no one did. I am going to bring that boy in and show him around." Acting upon his words he stepped outside and in a few minutes returned with the boy at his heels. For a half-hour the Mayor of Denver patiently exhibited the wonders of that car to the most appreciative audience of his career. He did not do so apathetically—he was as much interested, as enthusiastic, as the youngster himself.

Mayor Speer's enjoyment of nature was very deep. Flowers and trees were living things to him. His speech on "Humility" illustrates this fact. After a hard snowstorm

he was the first man upon his street to shake the white burden from his trees, and he personally watered the palms that stood in his office. A vase of flowers always rested upon his desk at City Hall. They were generally of vivid hue, preferably red, for he liked bright colors. It seemed to symbolize for him the happiness and good cheer that he liked to see in people's faces. Gloomy, unhappy people had a depressing effect upon him.

When the Cherry Creek improvement was under way and the time had come to park the terraces, Carolina poplars were planted between the slower growing elms in order to give quick shade. The intention was to remove the short-lived and unstable poplars as soon as the elms should have reached a growth sufficient to give the desired result. Indeed, it was necessary that this should be done to allow the elms room in which to develop. When the proper time arrived, during his third term, the city forester broached the subject.

"Cut down those trees? No, sir! Not while I am mayor," replied Mr. Speer, waxing warm with annoyance.

"But, Mr. Speer," said the forester, "it is for the good of the elms I am speaking. They need room to grow."

"I don't care what you are speaking for," was the heated reply. "They are not going to be cut down. And that ends it, plunk!"

Mayor Speer also had a great fondness for animals and birds. During his absence from the mayor's chair visitors at his office in the Majestic building often, upon walking in unannounced, found him standing at the window, his hands in his pockets, and a benevolent and interested expression upon his features as he watched the tiny sparrows fighting over the bird seed he had scattered upon the window ledge. It was a regular custom on his part to feed the birds around his home every morning before leaving for the office. Sometimes, when his mind was burdened with weighty public questions, he would forget this, but upon reaching City Hall, his first act would be to seize the telephone, call his wife and say: "Kate, I forgot to feed the birds today. Will you please do it for me?"

Mayor Speer's suavity of address was an acquired trait, and it required the exertion of all his tremendous will power to secure the control necessary for this. A winning personality was always his, but before he became the plausible, ingratiating politician that he was, he had to learn mastery of his emotions. His close associates often heard him say: "I have had to teach myself self-control. By nature I am quick-tempered. My impulse, when a man attacks me, is to strike back, straight from the shoulder. But a man in public office cannot give way to his emotions. I have had to get control of my temper and hold it in." He had the knack, to an astonishing degree, of retaining the friendship of a man while denying that man something that he wanted very earnestly. There are men who make a failure of public office because they cannot bear to say "no" to an old friend, when he asks a favor that their judgment tells them should not be granted. But, if Mayor Speer thought a favor should not be granted, he could give a decisive "no," and send his visitor from the office, still a friend and a stronger admirer of the Mayor than before.

When Mayor Speer announced his intention to run for office the third time as a non-partisan his old followers in the Democratic organization were much disturbed. They had not grown in vision and mental stature as he, and they sent a delegation to find out if this really was to be the case. The former machine leader quickly informed them that the report was true. It was the hardest task he had ever performed. This incident tested the allegiance of his supporters to the uttermost, but the remnants of the old machine withstood even this strain, and it was solidly behind him on election day.

The Speer amendment, adopted May 17, 1916, which named its author as mayor, reflects the well-digested thought of a highly practical and efficient municipal student, and

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embodies the conclusions of a lifetime of public service. In many respects this is the most remarkable municipal document in the history of this country.

The great power vested in the mayor under the Speer amendment was made possible by the consolidation of the City and County through the Twentieth amendment to the State Constitution, and the consequent ability of the citizens to empower municipal officials to perform the duties of county officials.

The distinctive features of the amendment are centralization of executive power in a mayor, an independent, unicameral council of nine and an independent auditor.

This system, which may be accurately described as an elective-manager form, gives the mayor, relatively speaking, more power than the mayor of any other American city. He practically is supreme in managing the city's finances, and appoints all officials, directly or through subordinates, without confirmation, except the councilmen, auditor, election and civil service commissions. The mayor may remove any employee to increase efficiency, with exception of fire and police employees.

Denver citizens are protected from an abuse of executive power by the municipal initiative, referendum and recall. The preferential voting system was not affected by the Speer amendment. With these weapons in the hands of the electorate it is difficult to conceive of a government more democratic and just, yet retaining such effective executive power. An unsatisfactory official may be recalled; laws demanded by the majority of the people may be initiated and passed; unjust laws may be referred. In the Speer amendment is centralization of power; by the charter all power is reserved to the people.

The mayor appoints directly the city attorney, four major executives designated as managers, and heads of eight other departments. The managers constitute a cabinet which advises with the mayor on all questions of finance, public policy, city planning, improvements and current administration. The Speer amendment provides for a non-political, non-partisan form of government.

When this revolutionary document was submitted for consideration the political opponents of Mr. Speer fought it on the ground that it gave the mayor too much power for any city official to have. They declared that it would create a czar.

So great was the confidence of the people in Mr. Speer's ability that they voted him all he asked. This was a most surprising reversal of public sentiment. When Mayor Arnold was elected the opponents of the retiring mayor printed what they termed his "political obituary." Four years later Mayor Speer came back stronger than ever, and continued to grow in strength through his administration. It was more than the crowning political triumph of his life; it was a vindication of his integrity in office, his work as mayor and his visions for a greater Denver. While in office before, the assessor, the treasurer, the sheriff, the clerk and recorder, the city clerk, had been elective. Under the Speer amendment the people delegated to him the power to appoint all these officials. Was there ever a more complete expression of confidence in a municipal official?

Defeated in this battle Mayor Speer's opponents had to content themselves for the time being by the assertion that the charter, a one-man power proposition, was written for Mayor Speer, and that no other man could be found big enough, and capable enough to govern the city under it. Even during the heat of the campaign they had never challenged his ability and genius.

The innovation in government worked out perfectly during Mayor Speer's term. There was no abuse of power. It met all requirements, not only under its author, but under his successor, Mayor W. F. R. Mills. To use a favorite expression of his, when referring to municipal government, "The character of the man is more important than the clothes he works in."

*Presented by  
J. A. Thatcher*

*Designed by  
Lorado Taft*



"The State", and Its Underlying Virtues and Defenses.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Third Term Mayor Speer's Greatest—Social Service the Dominant Note—Non-partisanship and Economy Practiced—Blue-Sky Ordinance—Natural Habitat Zoo—City Chaplaincy Created—War Activities—Liberty Bond Investment—War Risk Insurance Premiums—Municipal Training School for Soldiers—Death.*

THE STATEMENT already has been made that Mayor Speer's last term was his greatest. We believe that this is generally recognized and admitted by his fellow-citizens, whether they have been among his friends or opponents.

It was the finished product of a mind ripened by years of study and by travel; of a career moulded by every shade of adversity and success, of calumny and honor. He was the readier to give expression to impulses for kind deeds and words. The result was that, while he still carried forward his improvement plans, the dominate note of this term was social service.

The Speer Amendment had called, first, for a non-political administration, and, second, for economy. Naturally, there was great curiosity among Denver citizens to see how he would meet these pledges. His enemies had termed them mere political buncombe.

When the four managers were named it was found that two were Democrats and two were Republicans. This policy was carried on through the subordinate positions.

Under commission form of government city expenditures had mounted steadily, yet there had been few permanent improvements made from the general city funds. The payrolls had swelled steadily. Mayor Speer made a short preliminary survey of the situation and then began to abolish positions and consolidate minor departments. Before two months had passed, \$85,000 a year had been cut from the payrolls.

Among the first problems taken up were the Civic Center improvement and acquisition of the municipal organ for the Auditorium. In a previous chapter his success along these lines had been discussed, so that it is unnecessary to repeat these accomplishments.

Mayor Speer next determined to secure the transfer of insane patients from the City and County Hospital to the State Asylum in Pueblo. From the standpoint of humanity and economy this long had been a thorn in the side of Denver citizens. For years the authorities at the State Asylum had refused to accept persons adjudged insane, except in very small numbers and at their convenience. The result was that the city had been forced to maintain an insane ward at the County Hospital, which had not been designed for the accommodation of patients such as these. Approximately one hundred and fifty unfortunate men and women had been crowded into inadequate quarters, and left totally without the proper exercise, surroundings and attention. Furthermore, the cost to the city and county had averaged \$40,000 a year. The Colorado Constitution provides that the care of the insane shall devolve upon the state. However, the authorities at the asylum claimed a discriminatory power, and pleaded lack of accommodations.

Previous administrations had tried to remedy the situation by appeals to state authorities and to the Legislature. All efforts had proved in vain. Mayor Speer ordered petitions printed for submission at the state election in November, 1916, of an initiated amendment to the existing statutes bearing on the subject of the insane. These were circulated through the state, an intelligent campaign made, and the people, by adoption of the bill, ordered the state officials to provide adequate quarters for all persons legally adjudged

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insane. Within a few weeks such quarters had been provided and the insane victims in the County Hospital taken where they stood some chance of recovering their reason.

In conjunction with the Civic Center improvement, Mayor Speer began a personal campaign among wealthy residents to secure donations of important gifts to the city. He secured pledges from a number of men and, on December 8, 1916, in a semi-annual address before the Civic and Commercial Association, delivered his now famous "Give While You Live" speech. This created a profound impression, taken in conjunction with the attractive idea of a Colonnade of Civic Benefactors. Over a half-million dollars in gifts were showered upon the city within eighteen months. Among the gifts announced at that time were the following: A monumental fountain to cost \$100,000, designed by Lorado Taft, of Chicago, and presented by the late Joseph A. Thatcher, a pioneer banker; the pipe organ; a \$35,000 gateway at the esplanade entrance to the City Park, presented by John Clarke Mitchell in memory of Dennis Sullivan, pioneer banker; a number of drinking fountains, not erected at this writing, presented by a man who asked that his name be withheld. At the same time Mayor Speer announced that the city would soon commence construction of the Voorhies Memorial Gate on the Bates Triangle in the Civic Center. J. H. P. Voorhies, a wealthy pioneer, had left his estate, approximately \$115,000, for this purpose. Construction also was started on the Monti Gate at the Montview Boulevard entrance to the City Park, a \$15,000 granite gateway bequeathed by Joshua Monti. Within a few days after the address the heirs of Junius F. Brown, pioneer merchant, gave to the city his notable collection of paintings, valued at \$100,000. These included canvases by Jean Francois Millet, Camille Corot, Jean Baptiste, Narcisse de la Pena Diaz, Homer Martin, Henry Ranger, Georges De Mare, Charles Partridge Adams, Blommers, T. Bertillot, William Keith, and many others of note.

The donation of a \$40,000 canvas by John C. Shaffer, by Georges Rochegrosse, was also made at this time.

The following December Mayor Speer was enabled to make a further announcement of gifts. These latter included: a \$75,000 annex to the Colorado Museum of Natural History in City Park, presented by Mrs. Joseph Standley in memory of her husband; two stone gateways for entrances to the Denver Mountain Parks, presented by Finlay L. MacFarland; two bronze statues, one and one-half times life size, to be located upon the Civic Center in front of the colonnade. These groups, "The Bucking Broncho" and "The Indian Scout," will be delivered and installed during 1919. They were presented by J. K. Mullen and Stephen Knight, respectively, and were designed by A. Phimister Proctor, the noted sculptor of western life, whose boyhood days were spent on the streets of Denver. Each will cost \$15,000.

The Stockyards Association constructed an open air swimming pool at the Elyria Playgrounds, and the city erected a bath-house in conjunction with it.

The nation felt the pinch of the war during the spring of 1917, and soon prices started to climb. Coal dealers began to forecast an advance in the price of fuel during the next winter. These signs did not long escape the keen eye of Mayor Speer and, in June, 1917, he ordered an investigation of the coal situation. The City Council passed a food and fuel ordinance. An expert was sent to the lignite fields of Northern Colorado and, after a few weeks of preliminary work, the city signed contracts with the owners of three coal mines for their output. The Speer Amendment had created a municipal industrial bureau to stimulate trade, encourage industry and help labor. It had already revived some failing industries. To this bureau Mayor Speer turned over the problem of organizing and conducting a municipal coal department on a large, wholesale plan. The city rented three yards, equipped them, and, on September 15, 1917, began to take orders for domestic



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consumption, as well as to supply all city and county institutions. The result of this policy was that the price of lignite, the poor man's coal, was held down within reasonable limits, the market was stabilized and the retail coal dealers did not dare to attempt the threatened increase. Influence from every imaginable source was brought to bear to prevent this departure in city government. An attempt was made to buy the mines doing business with the city so as to stop delivery of coal. To combat this movement Mayor Speer, in an address before the Civic and Commercial Association on December 8, 1917, gave the following public warning to the antagonistic coal dealers: "You are kindling fires which may destroy you, so far as the coal business of Denver is concerned. Our people are willing to pay a fair profit, but they will not be imposed upon. Denver can go into the coal business in a proper way—own and operate its own mines—haul coal at night over the tramway lines to depots in all parts of the city; then with a short haul deliver it to the people and industries cheaper than you can possibly do it." This warning served to check the operators.

The first year of business showed that the city coal department had done a business of \$211,559.73, and saved to domestic consumers approximately \$50,000. A total of 37,520 tons was delivered to domestic consumers, and 10,583 tons to city departments. After taking over the water plant, the department added this and the Library to the institutions supplied with coal, and the total annual amount now delivered to city institutions through the department is approximately 20,000 tons.

Toward the close of the year the advance in flour made the bread situation acute. The ordinance authorizing the city to engage in the coal business also instructed the mayor to take steps to lower the prices of standard foods, if he deemed it necessary. With the idea of bringing down the cost of bread Mayor Speer, on December 17, 1917, opened a municipal bakery in the county jail, where a small plant was then in operation. The organization was placed under one of the city councilmen, John Conlon, a baker by trade. Before exact costs could be established The National Food Administration began to issue its rulings, making it unnecessary and practically impossible for the city to furnish bread to the people. However, Mayor Speer ordered the continuance of the bakery in the event of an emergency, and directed that city institutions be supplied from it. The city bakery produces bread for thirty-eight one-hundredths of a cent per ounce, as compared to sixty-six one-hundredths of a cent paid by the city to commercial bakeries during 1917. Among the institutions that now secure their bread there are the county hospital, county farm, Steele hospital, Sand Creek hospital and Detention Home. Several former human wrecks have secured positions with commercial bakeries and are now useful citizens.

During the same month Mayor Speer urged the sale of the old county farm, a 160-acre tract of land, abandoned because of its unsuitability for the purpose. For fifteen years it had been a white elephant on the hands of the city. Before the abolishment of the old board of county commissioners two rights-of-way across the farm had been sold to railroads, with the result that it had been cut up, swamps caused by lack of proper drainage, and the farm reduced to an estimated value of \$10,000. This land was drained and sold for approximately \$40,000.

Mayor Speer closed the year with a large surplus in the treasury. In fact, every year during his three terms showed the return of a surplus, always exceeding \$100,000, while a considerable percentage of city general funds were invested annually in permanent public improvements. As a financial administrator of public funds he was without an equal in the history of Denver.

Toward the close of 1917 the operations of oil stock promoters in Denver became so frenzied as to threaten a scandal that would bring Denver into the limelight nationally. Oil promoters began to congregate in the city, among them some with penitentiary records.

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The most bare-faced "fakes" were promoted and stock sold under the lure of glittering advertisements in the newspapers. The state had no adequate blue-sky law and there seemed no way in which to prevent people from staking and losing their money in the oil exchanges. It was the poorer and middle classes who seemed to fall victims most readily. They began to draw their money from savings banks and to invest in projects which were without any merit.

Mayor Speer viewed this situation with considerable alarm and issued warnings several times through the newspapers, but the prospect of gaining wealth quickly on a gambling proposition was too alluring for the victims to resist. Finally, in December, 1917, Mayor Speer ordered prepared a municipal blue-sky ordinance, which provided for the licensing of oil exchanges and brokers for purposes of regulation. The Council approved the plan and passed the ordinance December 10th. Immediately after it had gone into effect the brokers and promoters of several suspected companies were summoned to appear before Manager of Safety Dewey C. Bailey, in whom authority for enforcement of the ordinance was placed. Within the next four months some twenty-three companies had been investigated and the findings made public in the newspapers. Several brokerage licenses were revoked. The investigation of one company, as an illustration, showed that \$594,192.72 worth of stock had been sold; that of this \$237,677 had been paid out in commissions for stock sales; that the investors did not have the slimmest chance to recover a dollar from their investments.

The oil market in Denver showed an immediate decline after this, and by the time the third report was published in June, 1918, the wild-catters had been driven from the city. The result of the investigation was that hundreds of thousands of dollars were saved Denver citizens by this prompt and effective measure. The unfavorable advertising given the promoters was scattered broadcast, and put out of business companies that had been selling stock throughout the west and middle west, even though the ordinance was not effective outside the city and county limits of Denver.

Early in the year 1917 Mayor Speer's attention had been called to the need for improvements at the City Park Zoo. He cast about for a design that would be distinctive. It was forthcoming immediately, for the superintendent, Victor Borchardt, had worked out plans for a natural habitat zoo, built from concrete, stained to represent natural rock, the models for which were to be taken directly from cliffs in the Rockies west of Denver.

This plan had been submitted to three park department heads, one of whom served under Mayor Arnold. The other two were Commissioners of Property under commission form. None of them had grasped the possibilities of the plan. Mayor Speer at once realized its advantages and ordered commencement of the work. A crew of men was sent to the mountains to secure models, work was commenced on the site, and within the last week it has been completed—a miniature mountain, without bars or fences. The animals have been separated from the public by a moat; trees and shrubs grow upon the cliff sides, waterfalls trickle down the face of the rocks while, from the replica of a cliff-dwelling, the faces of monkeys peer whimsically at the spectator. The advantage of this creation as a landscape feature, as an improvement from the standpoint of the animals, and as an educational feature of prime importance, cannot be overestimated.

Another social service measure fathered by Mayor Speer was the creation of the office of city chaplain in March, 1918. The manner in which the idea was born illustrates the Mayor's habit of noting everything that occurred about him, and of analyzing the ordinary transactions of life.

For months a quiet, grave man frequently had dropped into the Mayor's office to ask a pardon for some unfortunate who, with extenuating circumstances to his credit, had fallen into the hands of the law. This man was Jim Goodheart, founder of the Sunshine Rescue

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Mission, known to the Mayor for many years. The frequency of these visits and the persistence of the pleader finally aroused curiosity in the restless mind of the executive. This first manifested itself in a searching cross-examination of Goodheart each time he appeared. The latter grew apprehensive. He feared he might be wearying the Mayor.

These questions, however, merely foreshadowed the passage of an ordinance creating the office of City Chaplain. An excerpt from the Mayor's letter to the Council, recommending the adoption of such an ordinance, will illustrate the functioning of his mind better than a description of the bill:

"From experience, I am convinced that there are as many persons in this community needing words of encouragement and sound advice as there are who require charitable aid and medical care. In many places the strong arm of the law must be used; the uniform of an officer is necessary, but there are times and occasions when the pointing out of right and wrong will do more permanent good.

"Every day men are sent to jail whose wives, children and mothers are the real sufferers, and, on their account, we are asked for a pardon. In some of those cases an opportunity is presented to do the offender good, but the city has no one whose special duty is to try and bring about right thinking and action. If a chaplain could turn one in twenty from his evil ways he would be rendering a great service to the city."

Upon passage of this ordinance the Mayor named Mr. Goodheart as city chaplain, imposing upon him the duty of visiting the police court, the city and county jails and the hospitals, that he might in an official capacity, advise and console unfortunates, ask for pardons when advisable and set the feet of the erring upon the paths of peace.

With the entry of this country into the European war Mayor Speer, with the same intensity and the same characteristically distinctive results that marked all his labors, turned his mind to the question of aiding the federal government.

The first war activity of the city was to plow free for the benefit of thrift gardeners vacant lots for which the water company had agreed to furnish free water. Eleven hundred and thirty-four lots were thus plowed during the spring of 1917, the number being increased to 4,600 the following spring.

During October, 1917, Secretary of the Treasury William G. McAdoo passed through Denver on the Second Liberty Loan campaign. The city, under its charter, did not have the power to invest its funds in government securities, but Secretary McAdoo agreed to protect the municipality by the issuance of treasurer's certificates if any objection was raised. A warrant was thereupon issued on November 17, 1917, upon the Sinking Fund, for the purchase of \$500,000 in Liberty Bonds.

This was followed by the passage of an ordinance providing for the payment of premiums upon each war risk insurance policy up to \$1,000, taken out by citizens of Denver who were serving or would be called upon to serve with the armed forces of the nation. A committee was appointed to investigate claims and make disbursements, checks were drawn upon a fund set aside by the council and, altogether, more than \$40,000 was paid by the city for this purpose.

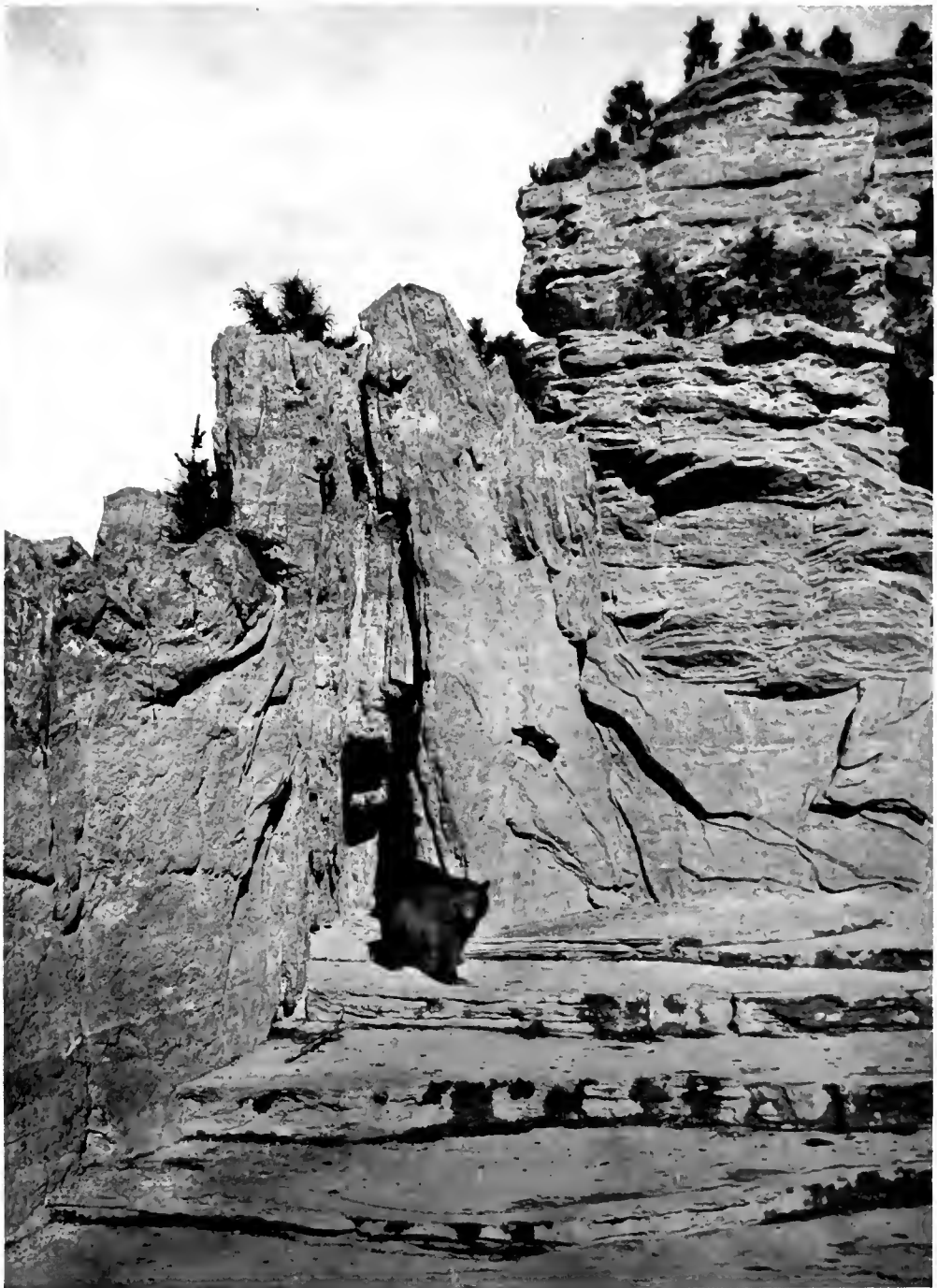
Denver was the first American city to take this course as it was also first in establishing a municipal training school for soldiers. The latter organization was created in March, 1918, soon after the establishment of the war risk premium board. The city provided drill masters to give the selective service men training in the manual of arms. The school was opened in the Auditorium with squad and company drill, afterward developing into company maneuvers in the City Park. The city also established a shooting gallery and secured the services of a rifle expert to teach the men how to handle a rifle. It was found that only thirty to thirty-five per cent. had ever fired a gun. As further aid to the



On This Site Now Rear Aloft the Cliffs of the Habitat Zoo.



The Animals Had No Privacy Save in Small Wooden Huts.



Bars Have Been Banished and Comfort Brought to the Animals.

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prospective soldiers classes were established in conversational French, and a professor of this language engaged to give instruction.

The effect of this school was soon noted after the men began to report at the various army training camps. They were at once picked out for their soldierly bearing, knowledge of tactics and familiarity with a rifle. A very high percentage were made corporals or sergeants immediately, some being given the rank of top-sergeant. The appreciation of the boys for the advantage given them by their home city, and the gratitude of the families for the financial aid awarded through the payment of premiums, is recorded in hundreds of letters on file in the records of the war risk board. Not alone was assistance furnished to the government, but the morale of the men called from Denver was raised and their devotion to the city of their birth or adoption cemented by bonds that will never break.

It was only a brief time after this that Mayor Speer passed away. He walked to his office one morning in May. The air was balmy and he carried his overcoat over his arm. A cold developed, but he paid no attention to it. He made a few attempts to perform his day's work but soon was compelled to return home for the last time. Double pneumonia developed, and after a brief illness he passed away at 3 o'clock p. m., May 14, 1918.

His last words showed that his work still was his dominant thought. In a semi-conscious condition he murmured: "I am under a strain all the time. Even now I feel it. I am trying to make the affairs of the city best conform to national needs at this time."

His physician said: "I wish that you would put such thoughts out of your mind for the present. Wait till you are stronger."

The last words of the Mayor were: "It is a strain, just the same."

The news of the great Mayor's death struck Denver with the impact of a blow. It brought genuine grief to her citizens and, as the days passed, the conviction became settled that his loss would result in a serious set-back in Denver's development.

Funeral services in honor of the Mayor were held on May 17. For an entire afternoon his body laid in state in the Auditorium of which he had been so proud. More than ten thousand persons attended the ceremonies. The Right Rev. Bishop J. Henry Tihen of the Catholic diocese of Colorado, delivered the invocation; the Rev. David H. Fouse, of the First Reformed Church, made the memorial address; the Episcopal funeral service was read by the Right Rev. Dean H. Martyn Hart, while Rabbi W. S. Friedman offered the benediction. The host of mourners also was catholic in character. With the conclusion of the ceremony the people upon request filed from the building, formed into line and passed through to view the remains. No ceremony of the kind could have shown less ostentation or display. The building was without decoration of any kind, except a massed bank of palms and crossed American flags at the foot of the organ, and a simple band of crepe around the casket. As the long line surged slowly past the bier the great instrument which Mayor Speer had so recently installed, played faintly the beautiful Chopin funeral march. In line were the city's wealthiest and poorest. Business men, social leaders, laborers; men and women of every nationality filed past, while a guard of police officers stood at attention. Women with babes in arms stood patiently for more than an hour that they might show honor and respect to the man who, for so many years, had been the city's first citizen. In its extreme simplicity and the great outpouring of citizens, the ceremony was the most impressive of its kind that the city had ever witnessed.

The final Sunday organ concert of the winter season on May 26 was made the occasion of a memorial service to the late Mayor. The Rev. Mark Laptan offered the invocation on this occasion; the Rev. George B. Vosburgh gave a reading from the Scriptures; Chancellor Henry A. Buchtel of Denver University, former Governor of Colorado, delivered a masterly eulogy and the Rev. Charles Odell Thibodeau pronounced the benediction.



## CHAPTER VIII.

*Personal Interests Neglected by Mayor Speer in Service of the City—His Vision for Denver's Betterment a Legacy of Incalculable Value—Overland Park—Decorative Sculpture—The Monumental Fountain on the Civic Center Suggested as a Memorial—His Last Vision: The Mount Evans Drive, an Outgrowth of the Mountain Park Idea—Conclusion.*

ONE OF THE FAVORITE accusations of Mayor Speer's enemies was that he had become enormously wealthy through his official connection with the city government. Veiled charges and insinuations were made that he had profited from the improvements completed, through real estate holdings, and no stone was left unturned in the effort to discover a modicum of proof to bear out these assertions. Some even said that he was a millionaire. The constant reiteration of these tales had created a general impression that he was at least worth several hundred thousand dollars.

The finest testimonial to his integrity and personal honor was made public when his estate was probated in the County Court. This man who had had unlimited opportunities to profit, who had handled many millions of the people's money, left an estate of \$45,000. When his great natural business ability is taken into consideration this modest sum is the best possible evidence that Mayor Speer, as his friends already knew, had neglected his personal interest continually, because he preferred to give his time in the service of Denver. Almost any line of business that he could have chosen would have yielded him far greater returns than the office of mayor. As a matter of fact Mayor Speer, during his last term in office, was offered a position at a salary of \$12,000 a year. He was then receiving \$6,000 a year as mayor, but he rejected the proposition without a second thought. During one of his speeches before a bankers association he coined the phrase, "Hand money and heart money." While Mayor Speer left no considerable estate of hand money, he bequeathed an inexhaustible fortune in heart money. To the city that he loved and to her citizens he willed his undaunted spirit, faith and courage; his high ideals of citizenship and manhood, and his visions. It remains to be seen whether this heritage is not greater than all his public works, for it will appear and reappear through the years as the builders of the future bring to pass the things that he had planned.

Mayor Speer's visions are tangible assets, not the vapory fabric of dreams. Some of them, and we cite as examples the Civic Center, the Habitat Zoo, the Platte River drive, already have been partially realized.

Others await the time when another shall put them into execution. Some are in process of formation. Mayor Mills, his successor, pledged himself to execute insofar as possible the trust left him by Mayor Speer. Soon after the latter's death he signed the contract for the "Wynken, Blynken and Nod" group, and this will be installed in Washington Park.

This idealistic children's group has a strong local sentiment attached to it, for Eugene Field, whose lullaby was the inspiration of the artist, secured his start toward fame on the old Denver Tribune. The sculptress, Mabel Landrum Torrey, is a native Colorado girl.

Just before Mayor Speer's death he conceived the idea of purchasing Overland Park, the spot where the first potatoes were raised in Colorado and the historic grounds upon which horse racing, automobile racing and the first flight of an aeroplane over Denver, were staged. Mayor Speer planned to purchase the west fifty-five acres for a gravel supply for street work, line with cement the pits left by excavation, and create a monster bathing

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beach, supplied with running water from the South Platte. The remaining part of the quarter section was to be acquired through gift or bond issue and converted into one of the great sport parks of the country, where the people might engage in athletic games and contests. Mayor Mills carried out the first step by signing a contract for acquisition of the park in January, 1919, and this is a vision that seems sure of realization.

During his first administration Mayor Speer conceived a project for construction of a shaded driveway along the banks of the South Platte River to the mouth of Platte Canon. Quietly and unostentatiously he pushed this drive within the city limits, and more has been accomplished than a majority of Denver residents realize. Several miles of the Platte River channel have been walled with concrete, as in the case of Cherry Creek, while the driveway, awaiting only a finished surface, extends to within a short distance of Overland Park. It will now be comparatively a simple matter to carry the drive to the city limits, and when that shall have been accomplished the fulfillment of the vision will follow as a matter of course. It will not offer sensational loops and hairpin turns, such as the Mountain Park highways afford, but it will give a pleasant trip under the stately cottonwoods to the mountain portals on the south.

One of the subjects constantly upon Mayor Speer's tongue during his last administration was the lack of decorative sculpture. He felt that too much attention had been paid to architectural forms, and that the artistic development of the city had been neglected from the decorative standpoint. "We need more sculpture, set at the end of street and park vistas, more fountains, more life," he reiterated. Before his death he had concentrated all his energies upon the problem of meeting this want, and it is known that he had converted several wealthy men to the idea.

In passing it may be said that Mayor Speer never approached a man upon the subject of a donation without having a tangible suggestion. If at all possible, he had secured a drawing, a photograph, or a model to visualize the idea he intended to convey. This, backed up by his contagious enthusiasm, enabled the unimaginative to conceive a mental picture of the object.

In connection with the Civic Center Mayor Speer had several definite objects in view. He regarded it as necessary for completion of the scheme that a City and County Building should be erected on the block west of Bannock street, facing the Capitol. He already had interested some wealthy men in a project to erect an art gallery to conform with the library, and had he lived, would have appointed a committee to raise funds for it.

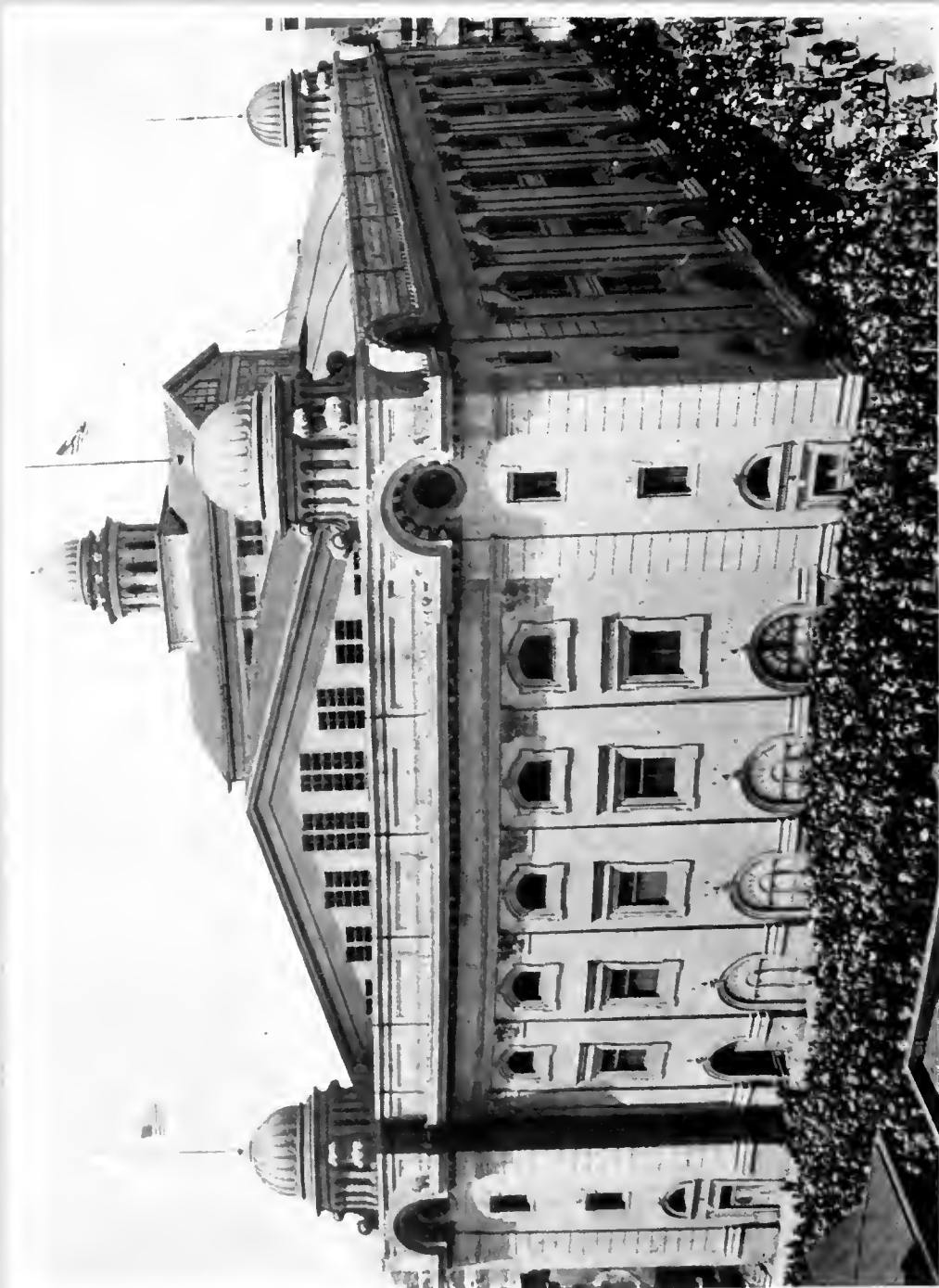
The imperative improvement needed on the Civic Center, in Mayor Speer's eyes, was the central fountain on the main plaza. This, he believed, should be spectacular in the highest possible degree. A towering jet of water, sculptured groups pregnant with life and action, and a series of bronze plaques upon which should be placed the heads of the state's great builders in bas-relief, were the central features of the plan. So well known to his friends was his determination to secure this fountain for the city that its erection as a memorial to him has been suggested. Executed in the way he would have endorsed, nothing could be made to express more accurately and nobly the spirit of Speer, for he was imbued with the dynamic force, the virile qualities, that the fountain must possess.

In closing this little book it is but proper the final words should be of Mayor Speer's last and greatest vision—the Mount Evans Drive. To the people of Denver the plan is comparatively new, as its agitation did not commence until Mayor Speer's third term had opened. But the dream had haunted him through the years of a transcendent skyline road that should ascend from Denver, pass through the mountain gorges and eventually emerge on the summit of some high peak. It was the natural sequel, for a man of his discernment, of the mountain park idea.





A Splendid, Uncompleted Vision—The Platte River Drive.



Rear View of the Auditorium, Mayor Speer's Favorite Work, on the Day of His Funeral.

## A CITY BUILDER

While Denver's great mountain park system largely was developed during the period of his absence from office, Mayor Speer was the originator of the idea and strongly supported the amendment authorizing the mill levy for the construction work. In making the above statement the writer is aware of the fact that it will be challenged. Credit for the idea generally has been given to Mr. John Brisben Walker of this city, who brought the matter before the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce in September, 1910, and later to the attention of the Real Estate Exchange. The latter body appointed a committee of ten, headed by K. A. Pence as chairman, to investigate the subject. Two months later the Chamber of Commerce referred the matter to its committee on Parks and Boulevards, of which Mr. Warwick M. Downing was chairman. The two committees joined forces and Mr. Downing was elected chairman of a joint executive committee. A few days later a committee from the Denver Motor Club was added, and other organizations rapidly came into line. The executive committee met once a week for more than a year and finally adopted a plan for a mountain park system which was submitted to the joint committee and later to the Mayor. On May 21, 1912, a charter amendment was submitted to the voters in which provision was made for a one-half mill levy for acquisition of mountain park lands, and improvement of them.

This is the official record as commonly accepted in Denver, but upon close investigation the writer found that Mayor Speer, in an address delivered on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary banquet of the Chamber of Commerce, May 24, 1909, said: "The man, or combination of men, who will build a shaded drive or Appian Way from our city into the mountains, opening into the canons, and to the summit of our lofty peaks, will be remembered and praised by other generations."

In these words, delivered eighteen months before Mr. Walker first publicly mentioned the subject, we find foreshadowed, not alone construction of the mountain parks, but construction of the Mount Evans Drive. If this is not sufficient to clinch the argument an extract from a speech delivered by Mayor Speer before the Young Men's Christian Association on February 21, 1910, definitely suggests a mountain park system for the city. On this occasion the Mayor said, in suggesting benefactions for the wealthy citizens: "A splendid opportunity is presented for some one with means to secure and present to the city a ten-thousand-acre mountain park, within twenty or twenty-five miles of the city, with beautiful valleys, canons, streams, cliffs and scenery unsurpassed, where the masses may spend a happy day and feel that some of the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains belongs to them. The donor of such a gift would be remembered for generations to come. Denver would be the attractive American city; within its sight would be opened the scenery of Switzerland and the valley of the Nile, which must be connected with first class railways. The question is, how are they to be built? Our state is behind in road building. The city has not authority to go beyond its limits. The surrounding counties are new and cannot alone afford to build the highways required, and I believe that we should go to the next legislature and ask for a road improvement district, consisting of Denver, Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas, Jefferson and Boulder counties, with authority to issue long-time district bonds to build modern road-ways. Denver needs them to send our new people and tourists out to see the wonders surrounding us, and Denver should help pay for them."

During the summer of 1910 Mayor Speer made many automobile trips into the foothills west of Denver, found and explored tracts of mountain land that he believed would make desirable parks.

It is not with any desire to detract from the credit due Mr. Walker's suggestion that the facts in regard to this matter are published, for the latter has been the originator of many

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valuable ideas, but the records of the case all point to the conclusion that Mr. Speer was the first publicly to advocate mountain parks.

Mayor Speer took up the Mount Evans subject in 1917. Various plans were brought to the attention of the commercial bodies and citizens, but the one finally decided upon as offering the best chances for realization of the project, was that for the creation of a national park from this region. The proposed drive, which will form the distinctive feature of this project, as differentiated from all other national parks, is the construction of a road from Squaw Pass to the summit of the peak, which will remain above timberline for more than half of the distance, scale the edges of precipices two thousand feet in height, touch the interesting lakes that lie above timberline, and offer views that cannot be excelled on the continent. In order that the city should be enabled to meet the government half-way, Mayor Speer directed that the mountain park road system be extended from Bergen Park to Squaw Pass, and instituted proceedings for acquisition by the city of some five thousand acres of privately-owned land within the borders of the proposed park. To throw the revealing light of publicity upon the advantages of the plan he sent several expeditions to Mount Evans for the purpose of securing photographs and data, which should show the scenic wonders of the region. For two years a bill for creation of the Mount Evans Park has been before Congress. The initial stages have been passed and the prospect for creation of the park seem of the best. This project now stands at the head of the National Park Bureaus plans, for it has received the endorsement of Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane, as well as that of the director of the bureau, Mr. Stephen Mather.

The Mount Evans drive was the most daring conception ever fathered by Mayor Speer. That brief reference to a driveway that would reach "to the summit of our higher peaks," made in May, 1909, is indubitable proof, when one considers his methods and works, that his mind had leaped what were then considered insuperable barriers and, at a bound, had conceived this transcendent project. Such mental feats as this cannot be considered as dreams; they are inspired visions. Even as this, were his visions of Cherry Creek redeemed, the Auditorium and the Civic Center, which he saw clearly in the distant future, while others endeavored vainly to foresee the things of the immediate tomorrow.



## APPENDIX

## Memorial Resolution

**W**hereas, the Chief Executive of this City and its most distinguished citizen, has passed to "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns"; and,

Whereas, the Council of the City and County of Denver is desirous of expressing its profound devotion and its sincere appreciation of the great and enduring benefits which his efforts have conferred upon our City, as well as expressing its deep sorrow for the irreparable loss which has been sustained by the community: Now, Therefore,

### **Be it Resolved by the Council of the City and County of Denver :**

That in the life and life work of Robert W. Speer we fully recognize a man of rare ability and power, of sterling honesty, broad vision and keen foresight, and while his indomitable courage and broad vision were the striking features of his character, they were not more remarkable than the warm and noble impulses of his heart. While he was ambitious and aggressive, it was because of his humanity and unselfish patriotism in the interest of the people he served which kindled and inspired his actions and steadfastness of purpose.

His achievements were not personal except for the satisfaction he obtained from rendering service to the city he loved. Possessed of shrewd business judgment and a persuasive manner, had he been so inclined he could have amassed great wealth, but he chose rather to devote his unremitting energies, his unsurpassed judgment and his world of experience to the glory of the city and state he loved.

His efforts, however, were not limited to Denver, or even to the State of Colorado, but were national in their scope. Since our country has joined in the great struggle for humanity his uppermost thoughts have been directed to this great cause. He has been a leader in establishing patriotic movements and measures to help "the boys over there", and in relieving the suffering at home. Many cities have adopted the ideas that originated with him for these purposes, and which have become of incalculable benefit to the nation.

Denver has gained wide fame as the result of his genius and from his wise exercise of administrative and legislative power, until today there is no city in the world further advanced in civic development, in civic ideals and in progressive organizations and laws. Through his constructive ability and unparalleled accomplishments Denver has been converted from a frontier town to a metropolitan city and has become renowned throughout the world as the "City Beautiful." His completed works will perpetuate his memory more than shafts of granite and tablets of bronze.

The mind that conceived and the hand that wrought these splendid works are now stilled, but the unselfish spirit that inspired them is not dead, and this spirit and the cherished memory of Robert W. Speer will ever live as sweet as the distant melody of that great organ which was secured through his untiring perseverance.

Passed by the Council and signed by its President this 20th day of May, A. D. 1918.

LOUIS F. BARTELS, *President.*

Signed and approved by me this 22nd day  
of May, 1918.

Attested by me with the corporate seal of  
the City and County of Denver.

W. F. R. MILLS, *Mayor.*

CHARLES A. LAMMERS, *Clerk and Recorder*  
*ex-officio Clerk of City and County of Denver.*

By W. S. PECK, *Deputy Clerk.*

# ADDRESSES OF ROBERT W. SPEER



## GIVE WHILE YOU LIVE

*One of R. W. Speer's Semi-annual Speeches*

*Before the Denver Civic and Commercial Association, December 8, 1916*

GENTLEMEN:—As we look down the highway of the past we find that men have been measured by what they have done—not by what they have gathered. History forgets what men possessed, or the luxury in which they lived.

A man who does not reflect more sunshine than gloom is a failure in life. We must all do something to help others if we want to be remembered longer than it requires sod to grow on our graves. Many people by death produce more secret joy than true sorrow; if a person is dependent death brings a sense of relief even to friends; if independent, the estate often receives more attention than the memory of the departed.

I have stood before the graves of many wealthy men in our cities of the dead, and asked myself the question, "Is life a success which is entirely spent in a struggle for gold, and ends in a forgotten and neglected marble slab?" Must the name of a leader in wealth or business be cut in marble to be remembered even by his associates in daily life? Those who come after us care nothing for names—it is only good deeds and kind acts which live and are remembered.

One of the most neglected ways in which people can make themselves bigger and better is by helping to make the city in which they live more attractive.

Ugly things do not please. It is so much easier to love a thing of beauty—and this applies to cities as well as to persons and things. Fountains, statues, artistic lights, music, playgrounds, parks, etc., make people love the place in which they live. Every time a private citizen, by gift or otherwise, adds to a city's beauty, he kindles the spirit of pride in other citizens. One man truly proud of his city is worth a hundred well-meaning but indifferent persons.

Denver is a young city, and while her public gifts will not compare with many older cities, yet she has made a start, and her citizens are at heart as generous and have as much local pride as the people of any other section of the country.

Let me call attention to some of the things we now enjoy which have been provided by public benefactors:

The George W. Clayton School for Orphan Boys was built and maintained out of a gift of \$2,500,000 left in trust to the city. So long as Denver stands this institution will be lifting unfortunate boys out of temptation and want—fitting them for higher vocations of life. William Barth by his will added \$25,000 to this school fund.

The Colorado Museum of Natural History is the repository of many interesting and valuable gifts to Denver. The building itself was partially erected through private contributions—a total of \$50,000 having been provided by public-spirited citizens.

Chief among the museum gifts in interest and value is the Campion gold collection, a crystalline gold exhibit unequalled anywhere in the world. It was presented by John F. Campion, a fitting gift from a successful mining man.

The collection of Chinese and Japanese bronzes and porcelain, collected by Walter C. Mead and presented to the museum, is an exhibit of Oriental art of exceptional interest.

Other exhibits presented by public spirited citizens might be cited that possess unique points of interest, as, for instance: The stalactite cave, excavated from one of their

Mexican mines by Dennis Sullivan, of Denver, and Grant B. Schley, of New York, and presented by them to the museum.

The Porter-Pratt mineral collection, collected by Mary Kimble Pratt and presented to the city by Henry M. Porter.

The Cupid and Psyche, in marble, recently presented by Lawrence C. Phipps, Sr., is a fine example of art; while the moose group, presented by Harry C. James, and the grizzly bear group, presented by J. A. McGuire, show that Denver citizens have at heart the preservation of a native animal exhibit.

The Artists' Club has started a collection of choice pictures for a municipal art gallery.

The Cheesman memorial pavilion, a classic structure constructed of Colorado marble at a cost of \$100,000, was erected in memory of the late Walter S. Cheesman by Mrs. Cheesman and Mrs. Gladys Cheesman Evans to perpetuate the memory of a husband and father.

The Pioneer monument, symbolic of the terrors and the triumphs of Colorado pioneers, was erected by private subscriptions at a cost of \$75,000, largely through the efforts of John S. Flower.

The strong spirit of Scotch nationality inspired the Caledonian Club of Colorado to erect the Burns monument in City Park at a cost of \$9,000.

The Carnegie gifts for public libraries and branches amounted to \$280,000.

The McLellan gate, costing \$13,000, was erected in the effort to stir in Denver citizens a sense of civic pride that would cause them to beautify their city by architectural and art features. W. W. McLellan, who built this gate, is a man of moderate means, and I love to hold this gift up as an example to our men of wealth.

The Sopris gate, costing \$5,000, stands in memory of Richard Sopris, once mayor of Denver, after whom Mount Sopris was named. His children erected it in memory of their father.

The attractiveness of the auditorium is immeasurably heightened by the great allegorical drop curtain and the red plush draperies that soften the harsh appearance of the concrete. The Colorado Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, thus demonstrated a patriotism that is always theirs by this \$10,000 gift.

The Welcome Arch, which cost \$25,000, is another example of the co-operative spirit found in the city. A few months ago Mrs. Hallack deeded a block of ground to the city for a playground. Mrs. Isaac Berlin presented a drinking fountain. The citizens of Elyria, a concrete swimming pool.

The city has not yet been able to avail itself of bequests that have been made by Benjamin Salzer, who left \$5,000 for the erection of a drinking fountain; or of the \$75,000 bequest left by John H. P. Voorhies for improving the civic center.

Within a few weeks Joshua Monti left \$15,000 for an ornamental gate at some park entrance.

These and many minor gifts not mentioned are the pioneers in Denver city giving—they have opened the way which others may travel with true pleasure and lasting profit.



Future monuments will be erected to men for keeping out of war, not for leading others in battle; for lifting burdens, not for gathering gold; for starting waves of happiness, rather than currents of selfishness and greed. These monuments will be built by loving hands and thankful hearts, and located where the people live—not in cemeteries. Tombs, mausoleums and shafts in cities of the dead, depress, spread fear and gloom; while monumental fountains, inspiring sculpture, educational art, music, parks and playgrounds, scattered among the people, spread sunshine and joy through future generations. We all know that the good a man does lives after him, and I believe that he cannot go anywhere after death that the pulsations for good he started in life will not reach him and bless him.

There are niches all over Denver which should be filled with works of art in honor and in memory of men now dead, for the important part they played in our growth and development. Governor Gilpin, Governor Evans, Senator Hill, Senator Wolcott, D. H. Moffat, W. H. James, H. A. W. Tabor, Myron Reed and others deserve something that will reach the eye, touch the heart and continue grateful thoughts as years go by.

Denver needs so many things today which cannot be paid for from general taxation. It is so in all cities, yet I am glad that this condition prevails, for it gives men who have been successful in life the opportunity they need to give. Most men are so busy chasing the dollar that they neglect golden opportunities for happiness. Too much wealth is as much a curse to a community as too much poverty. It takes a bigger man rightly to give away a fortune than it does to make it.

The struggles and battles of life have a tendency to make men thoughtless and indifferent to others—one financial success only makes them more anxious for another. Occasionally some jar in life throws a man for a time out of his accustomed channel, and when he wipes away a few tears, binds up a few wounds, his heart muscles relax, the pulsations become natural, and he wants to plant something that will blossom and bear wholesome fruit for those who are to come after him.

Let me suggest a few of Denver's needs where public-spirited citizens can help.

A park gateway at the esplanade entrance to the City Park, with concrete pylons about forty feet high, balustrades and fountain, would stand for ages and fittingly express a kind thought of some one for Denver.

The city owns a number of playgrounds which need equipment. I hope that some citizen, in memory of a child dead—or in honor of one living—will furnish the equipment for a modern, up-to-date playground, and permit us to name it after such a child.

Denver's auditorium should have one of the best pipe organs in the world, where recitals could be given each day for the pleasure of our own people and the stranger within our gates.

A social center building, with a branch library, would brighten and better the lives of our Globeville citizens.

A municipal art gallery should balance our public library on the civic center.

Artistic and useful drinking fountains scattered throughout the busy part of the city would enable thousands daily to drink the purest of water—through the kindness of some generous-hearted citizen.

Our streets and parks are almost barren of modern sculpture. A social center building is needed in our Jewish quarters. A bathhouse building in Elyria.

Our animals in the City Park need new homes. Prison bars can be done away with. Live animals can have as proper setting as dead ones in our museum. Concrete rocks, waterfalls, trees, etc., with a moat in front, would make animals even in captivity feel and look at home.

We need a magnificent fountain in our civic center; an artistic bandstand; colonnades of Colorado marble consti-

tuting a court of honor, where the names of those who have contributed to Denver's beauty and betterment shall be carved in granite.

A free highway to the summit of Mount Evans would bring the equals of some of the grandest views of Switzerland within fifty miles of Denver. Each summer an ever-increasing throng would travel up this road of scenic wonders and return with inspiration to do bigger and better things. Big views make big thoughts and big thoughts make big men.

Many of us have passed the summit and are sliding down the hill of life. It pays us all at times to take an inventory of ourselves, especially when we are near the end of the trail, and to ask, "What have we done to make the path easier for those who are to follow? Have we lessened any grades? Thrown out rocks? Have we built any shelter along the way? Cut out underbrush and opened up vistas which inspire and stimulate the best side of man?"

I am proud to announce that we have citizens who are planting roses along life's highway, where the fragrance can be enjoyed by all our people. One of our successful and most honored citizens has contracted with Lorado Taft, of Chicago, to produce one of the most beautiful monumental fountains to be found in this or any other country. It will be located in the civic center, where the Donald building now stands, on the south triangle corresponding with the Pioneers' monument on the north.

The donor does not desire to have his name mentioned at this time, but I feel that the magnitude of the gift, together with the high character of the man giving it, is of so much importance to this community, and of so much value as a stimulant to others, that I am going to give his name and ask his forgiveness afterward. Joseph A. Thatcher, known and loved by us all, is the generous giver. Mr. Thatcher realizes that it is the wheat we sow—not the wheat we garner—that brings the increase. May this munificent act add years to his life—that he may see more of the harvest of pleasure and happiness resulting from his planting.

A gentleman who has resided here for many years, and who loves Denver, will erect in the business section of the city street drinking fountains which will be both attractive and useful. He will not permit me to use his name, but we will all drink with him and to him as the years go by.

It is a pleasure for me to announce that the esplanade entrance to the City Park is to have a fitting gateway—and it is to be erected in memory of Dennis Sullivan, who was known to most of us as a man always true to his friends. He was strong in his likes, and perhaps in his dislikes. Yet all over this city you will find persons whom he has helped, without any publicity. I will never forget, as a poor boy and a stranger, trying to gain health and make a living, how in many ways he helped and encouraged me. Those of us who enjoyed his friendship and knew his worth will, as we pass through this gateway in his honor, throw out grateful thoughts to his memory. This ornamental gateway will cost \$20,000.

Another citizen, known for his good deeds, has authorized me to say that he will expend \$10,000 for a park gateway. The plans and location will be worked out during the winter and the work completed during the summer. He does not wish me to use his name, but I do want to say that he stands for the highest type of manhood and is a business leader in Denver.

For many years I have been anxious to see one of the best pipe organs in this country placed in our municipal auditorium. The city let a contract for such an organ during my former administration as mayor, to cost about \$50,000, but it was not built. Notwithstanding the increase in cost of material and labor, this contract can be carried out today. Knowing that the money for such a purpose could not be taken at this time from the city's general revenue, as taxes must be lowered, I have asked a number of corporations and individuals to help make this pur-



chase and they have made liberal subscriptions. I hold in my hand pledges for \$20,000, as follows:

The Denver Gas and Electric Light Company.....	\$5,000
The Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company.....	3,500
Denver Union Water Company.....	2,500
The Denver Tramway Company.....	2,500
A friendly corporation.....	2,500
The Denver Sewer Pipe and Clay Company	1,000
Henry M. Porter.....	1,000
E. E. Sommers.....	1,000
A friend to Denver.....	1,000

We are fortunate in having in this city an organization known as the Rotary Club, which stands for service—the kind of service that makes men better and happier. They

believe that “He profits most who serves best.” Their board of directors has informed me that they will raise the balance of the money necessary to secure this great organ. The use of the words “mister” and “failure” is prohibited at all their meetings. They do not intend to make this effort a burden on any one, but to give those who can afford it an opportunity to help place the best of organ music where it can be enjoyed without cost by rich and poor alike. Truly a Rotarian civic service.

We start in the year 1917 with gifts to the city amounting to \$275,000, \$185,000 from the living and \$90,000 from the estates of those who have passed away. This is a splendid showing, and I feel confident that, before the year ends, this amount of gifts from the living will be largely increased. I am proud to be mayor of such a city.

In closing, let me impress upon you that what a man does for himself fades with him—what he does for a community lives long after he is gone.

## HAPPINESS

*An Address before the Denver Chapter,  
American Institute of Bankers, June 18, 1913  
By R. W. Speer*

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**—The Far East, on the other side of the World, is so big, its people so numerous, and its customs so different, that I could not do the subject justice in the few moments at my disposal tonight, so, with your permission, I will confine my remarks to things nearer home and in closer touch with The Denver Chapter of the American Institute of Bankers.

There are more struggles for money than for anything else in life, and it is only natural that the men who handle it, and make us keep our bank balances in black instead of red, should be interesting to us all. The general in the army gets the credit for a victory largely won by his men; a banker makes a reputation on the faithful services, good judgment and courteous treatment of those under him. It is hard to estimate, in dollars, the value of faithful helpers in any enterprise. There are some banks and corporations which do not seem to realize the debt they owe for faithful service; others are ever ready to appreciate and reward merit.

We judge men too much by what *they have* and too little by what *they are*. The light from gold seems to shine so brilliantly upon many people that the more delicate and beautiful colors in life cannot be seen. What our country needs today above everything else is different weights than gold and silver with which to weigh success. Small things well done; kindness and justice to all, make a bigger man than the drawing of a successful ticket in the lottery of business.

Happiness, after all, is the mainspring of action the whole world around. Men differ as to what it is, how to get it, and how to keep it. Many believe happiness is the possession of things and what they will procure, when, as a matter of fact, it is a condition produced by what radiates from a man.

A mistake is made by some in thinking that it can be enjoyed alone, bottled up within themselves, forgetting what Byron said:

“All who would win  
Must share it;  
Happiness was born a twin.”

The live question before us all is,—How to get it? We are striving for it in various ways. The dollar route seems to be the most popular, and everywhere we find muscle, brain and energy put to their utmost test to gain it. Some trample upon friends and honor to win the prize, and when

wealth has been attained they find that the struggle has so twisted and snarled their own lives that happiness refuses to live with them.

A short time ago I talked with a man near the end of life's journey, who had made a success in gathering dollars, and he said that in looking back over it all, his happiest days were when he was working hard from morning until night, enjoying the best of health, and laying away about five hundred dollars a year. Wealth had brought with it a weight of responsibility, much trouble and care. The prize for which he had striven proved to be a yoke which he himself had placed around his neck, and it had calloused and bruised some of the sweetest things in life.

Religion links happiness to many; life in touch with the Creator brings peace and contentment, which are the most important parts of happiness; the full realization is to come after death. Office, honor and power are held up as gateways, and, while they may lead in the right direction, will never reach the desired goal. Some seek and find happiness in learning, music and art. Pleasure and fast living may fool some for a time, but happiness must be fed on pure food to retain its healthy growth.

Success in a profession is a near relative of happiness, but so often there are other relatives with whom it cannot agree.

Business for the love of it, more than for the money in it, brings a certain kind of happiness, which would be complete if the men engaged in it could only learn to distribute, as well as they have learned to gather. It takes a bigger man properly to do the right thing with money than it does to make it. How many men have built foundations for monuments and failed to erect the shaft!

In the interior of Java I found a native family which had no money; wanted none; claimed to be contented and happy. I was surprised to find the man, apparently of the lower class, speak English, and I asked him where he had learned it. He told me that as a young man he had been a sailor; was in New York and many of the leading cities of the world; that as fast as he made money he had spent it for clothes, entertainment, etc., as did his companions. For many years he had worked hard, but had saved nothing; in fact, was both in debt and in trouble. Finally, he decided that it was a mistake to work; that more real happiness could be found in a simple life. He returned to Java, married, and was raising a large family without a dollar. His bamboo house was built by himself and wife; it was

located in the midst of tropical vegetation; a mountain stream dashed down over the rocks near by; in a small garden he raised some rice and tobacco; his children wore no clothes; he and his wife only loin cloths. He picked bananas as he wanted them; gathered bread fruit as he needed it; and if he did not want to climb trees for coconuts, he waited until they fell to the ground. As a man forty years of age, he declared that he was happy and free from care. He said: "What more could any man with money get out of life?" I asked him if he did not feel that his children should be educated, and he said: "No; education would make them long for things which they could not have; there is more true happiness for them as they are." I do not mention this as an example to follow, for the world cannot move backwards, but only to emphasize the fact that money is not all there is to life.

A certain amount of this world's goods is necessary for life and comfort. Honest effort will not drive away happiness, but we must all learn and realize that it can be attained and retained without wealth.

No man can successfully wear the coat of happiness in his office and go in his shirt-sleeves at home.

Human nature is a strange thing. When some people find that they cannot be happy themselves they set out to see that no one else shall be. They create distrust, carry tales, love scandal, and try to make the heart-strings of others produce sadder notes than their own.

Happiness makes us optimistic, and the lack of it encourages the pessimist.

We have all gone down town in the morning when every person we met seemed to have gotten out of bed in the wrong way; a grunt instead of a Good Morning; complaints about everything going to the dogs; the city, the state, the nation, all wrong, until, by the time we had reached our office, we had taken on the same spirit. Depressed and depressing, we were unable properly to do our day's work. But the next day everybody seemed to be smiling, radiating sunshine. "Times have been quiet, but they are improving." "We have so many natural advantages that it is impossible to keep us down." "You are looking fine!" "Glad to see you!" Then you enter your office full of happiness and courage, capable of accomplishing twice what you did the day before.

Happiness is contagious, and it is valuable as an asset to any city; encourage it, and mountains will drop into mole hills; new pulsations of life will throb in every branch of business.

The only way to keep happiness is to be continually giving it to others. It is different from any other possession, because the more you give away the more you have. Many selfish people have lost what little they had, because they failed to learn this fact.

Silks may make more rustle than cotton; a mansion may be built next to your cottage; automobiles may pass you while walking along the roadway, but if you have happiness within, radiating outward, you have the most valuable thing in life, and a key which will help you unlock the future.

## HUMILITY

*Remarks of R. W. Speer*

*Before the Denver Rotary Club, January, 1918*

GENTLEMEN:—Among Rotarians you will find the best of men, but I am sorry to say that Pride and her sister, Self-Satisfaction, have been trying to flirt with many members of this club. I feel that I am serving best, if I pull aside our embroidered cloaks and make us look at ourselves in a true mirror. Our limitations and imperfections should make Conceit take the "count" in the first round.

Why should man be proud, when with our boasted intelligence, we let specks of life with little or no brain power surpass us in every field of physical activity? A rabbit can outrun us; a dog can outsmell us; if we had the strength of an ant in proportion to our size, we could carry home every evening two or three tons of coal. We cannot swim with a duck or fly with a bird. We may boast of our athletic build, but a flea can jump five hundred times its height, and to equal it in proportion to our size, we should be able to jump half a mile. Few of us have the contentment of a cow, or the persistent energy of a bee. If the special gifts or powers distributed in various animals around us could be concentrated in any one of us, he would be known as the most wonderful man in the community.

In many ways lifeless matter puts us to shame. Five gallons of gasoline will carry us farther in three hours than we could carry the gasoline in three days. We boast of our discoveries in electricity, but what do we really know about it? In mid-ocean I watched the wireless operator break his electric current into dots and dashes, then, with a receiver to my ears, heard an almost instantaneous reply come out of space from a vessel more than a thousand miles away. I realized then, as I never did before, that man is but a fly on the fringe of some mighty power beyond.

Do not be egotistical about ancestors. Many claim that if we go back far enough we will find that our great grandfathers caught the coconuts as the baboon dropped them from the tree top.

Animals, grain and vegetables have life, and suffer when injured the same as any of us. Their cups of pain and

sorrow may not hold as much as ours, but they are real and can be made to overflow. The life of grain is concentrated in the seed, but we crush and grind it until that life is destroyed, in order that the dust of its home may contribute to our growth. Fruit and vegetables would live and die a natural death, but we watch until they reach manhood, when we pluck them from their life-sustaining homes and keep them in agony as long as possible by artificial means, so that our appetites may be satisfied. Several days ago this piece of celery was torn from its home and life-supplying elements—because we did not hear its cry of anguish, we gave it no thought. It has been kept cool and moist to prevent death and prolong suffering, because man wants to eat it while there is life within. When we invent some instrument which will enable us to recognize the suffering of vegetable and plant life, we will no more think of taking cut flowers and burning the stems to keep them from bleeding to death, than we would think today of applying the same treatment to an animal.

We kill to live. We are daily destroying life and eating carcasses in order that we may exist. Last year over three million animal prisoners passed through our Stockyard prison on their way to death. Each day during this year nine thousand cattle, hogs and sheep, that have in no way wronged man, will be forcibly taken from their peaceable surroundings and sold in this city for slaughter, in order that intellectual and civilized man may grow strong and fat. Led by the Buddhist, one-fourth of the people of the world refuse to take life which they cannot give back, and they seem to get along nicely by making every day a meatless day. We could the better serve our Country in these trying times by following their example!

We are most cruel without knowing it; we are egotistical without reason for it.

Rotarians, don't be proud!

## TWO CURRENCIES

*Address of Welcome to the Thirty-fourth Annual  
Convention of the American Bankers' Association  
September 30, 1908*

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Money is sought for more universally than anything else in life, and it is natural that the men who handle and, to a large extent, control the currency of this country, should be looked up to by all classes of people. Denver, as one of the newest cities of this country, is especially glad to greet and welcome your association. You have heard of western hospitality. It is only nature, freed from restraints and formalities—an honest impulse coming directly from the heart.

Denver is young in years, but she is great in expectations. Her credit is good because she has large assets and promptly meets her obligations. She has never overdrawn her account and, for her age and size, has as small a debt as any city in this country.

In our journey through life we devote our energy, time and best thought along special lines. Your views are sought after on financial questions because you have made them your special study. Yet I believe that we all, or many of us, become so intent upon our own work that we fail fully to appreciate and understand the work of others.

There are two kinds of currency; one issued by the government, and sought for what it gets; the other issued from the heart, and valuable for what it gives. Hand money and heart money! They are both issued in all denominations, so as to meet our every want. We are rated by the amount we can gather in of the one, and give away of the other. In one case we are enriched by getting it, while in

the other case we are enriched by giving it. There are debts and obligations which can and must be paid in cash, but there are others which can be paid only in deeds, kind words and good thoughts. These currencies are not interchangeable, and many mistakes have been made in life by trying to pay the debt of the one with the money of the other. Injustice has ever been done in judging men by their heads and cash, rather than by their hearts and deeds. I have known men rich in one currency to be paupers in the other. Friends, health and happiness have been sacrificed for gold and silver, which only accompanies us to the grave, while heart money scatters sunshine and roses in this life, and passes death as an individual credit in the life to come.

We judge men too much by their accumulations. The time will come when they will be judged more by their disbursements. It requires a greater man rightly to give away money than to make it, and I feel confident that it will not hurt the bankers of this country, and all classes of people, occasionally to stop counting gold and figure up their assets in heart money.

It is the earnest desire of our citizens that your stay on earth may be as pleasing as they would have your sojourn to be in Denver; and that your journey after death may have as grand scenery and pleasant surroundings as you will find on your trips through Colorado, where the mountains of Switzerland are united to the Valley of the Nile with ribbons of gold.

## ONE-MAN POWER

*Excerpt from an address before the  
Commercial Club of Colorado Springs, March 29, 1917*

The aim and purpose of all government, city, state or national, should be safety, prosperity, and happiness for the people. No government can long exist without the consent of the governed, and that consent will not be continued from a discontented people. The masses must, sooner or later, be assured of an opportunity at all times to make a living, and be provided against want during old age, not as a matter of charity, but as a duty of society toward the individual.

The prosperity of a city cannot be measured by its population. The welfare of its citizens is the true yardstick. An individual is weak—a community is strong, and that strength should be used to reduce the burdens of the people and build up the weak.

Upon the service rendered, wrongs righted, opportunities opened, and the removal of the old age nightmare, will largely depend the success or failure of self-government. The dangers which threaten the future will not start in the country—the city will be the battlefield. Solve the government of cities and you have solved all government.

The separation of the city from state and national elections; the prohibiting of party designations on municipal ballots, together with the knowledge that cities are suffering from inefficiency by reason of their being made political

footballs, are streaks of dawn on the horizon of non-partisan municipal government.

Our charters and laws, governing cities, have been drawn on the theory that officials cannot be trusted. We have attempted to provide how every step shall be taken to produce results. Unnecessary charter provisions, red tape and restricting laws will not make a crooked official straight, but they have often made a straight official useless.

Personally, I believe in the concentration of all administrative power in the hands of one official. It fixes the responsibility for good or bad government; you know whom to praise, and you know whom to blame. Large powers will produce a result one way or the other, and can safely be granted where you have a recall in the hands of the people.

Men naturally differ as to what is the best form of city government. Experiments are being tried everywhere, and what proves a success in one place is a failure in another, proving that the men who administer are more important than the clothes they work in. The kind of government speaks louder than its form—the size of officials means more than the size of a council.

I am weak on theories. The practical side of an administration appeals to me. Results count for more than the conveyance in which they are delivered.







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